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THOMAS AIRD

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
THOMAS AIRD

FIFTH EDITION

WITH A MEMOIR

BY THE REV. JARDINE WALLACE, B.A.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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MEMOIR.

THOMAS AIRD, author of the following Poems, was the son of James Aird and his wife, Isabella Paisley, and was the second of nine children. He was born on the 28th of August 1802, in the parish of Bowden, Roxburghshire, under the shadow of the Eildon Hills, in the enchanted Border-land, close to the abbeys of Dryburgh and Melrose, which the genius of Scott has made for ever memorable. The Tweed, which he dearly loved, flows through the classic vale, and from the rising ground you see upon the horizon the low blue line of the Cheviot Hills and Flodden Field. The family of Aird belonged for generations to that substantial and independent class named Portioners, who cultivated their own land, held in feu of a neighbouring nobleman, and who frequently combined with this some other industrial employment. His parents, who professed the religious principles of the

Antiburghers, were persons of admirable character and intelligence. They brought up their children anxiously in the fear of God, and enforced a careful, though somewhat strict observance of Sunday—

“Such as grave livers do in Scotland use.”

Woe to the offender who betook himself to whistling on that day, or to vain whittling with his knife. Theirs was an orderly, yet happy home ; and on week-days, when lessons were over, the father would sing to the little circle some rare old Scotch song, while the kind, thrifty mother plied the spinning-wheel. It is said that a library containing some romances, which Thomas started in Bowden when a lad, was at first regarded with considerable suspicion by Mrs Aird. She was afraid of the seductive literature, and thought, besides, that it was apt to interfere unduly with the knitting and sewing of her daughters. But the good lady, stumbling by accident one day among the books upon ‘Thaddeus of Warsaw,’ was so delighted with the tale, that not much more after that was said about the sin of novel-reading. The venerable pair died each at the age of 86, having spent sixty years together in married life ; and their gifted son never ceased to revere the memory of those whose holy affection had guarded his youth from evil, and kept it pure. The following domestic scene, in the pages of the ‘Old Bachelor,’ is evidently drawn from

his father's home : "To see the old men, on a bright evening of the still Sabbath, in their light-blue coats and broad-striped waistcoats, sitting in their southern gardens on the low beds of camomile, with the Bible in their hands, their old eyes filled with mild seriousness, blent with the sunlight of the sweet summertide, is one of the most pleasing pictures of human life. And many a time with profound awe have I seen the peace of their cottages within, and the solemn reverence of young and old, when some grey-haired patriarch has gathered himself up in his bed, and, ere he died, blessed his children." One feels disposed to regret that the good old race of Portioners, with their primitive customs and picturesque surroundings, are fast vanishing away, and that the little properties on which they lived in modest independence are now swallowed up and lost in the large ambitious estates and farms around :—

" Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

Thomas received his first lessons at his father's knee, and, like so many eminent men, was educated afterwards at those parish schools which have been for generations the just pride of Scotland. He showed his love of letters at an early age, by running off one day to the teacher at Bowden, with his book concealed about his person ; and he was so

bent upon instruction, that his parents, in order to gratify him, took his elder brother from school, to fill the place of usefulness at home which he had vacated. After this he attended for a time the parish school of Melrose. A letter in rhyme, which was kept till worn to shreds by his surviving brother, James, was his first known attempt at verse-making. Thomas was no book-worm, however. He excelled in all outdoor sports, especially in leaping; and he used to attribute the varicose veins and rheumatic pains from which he suffered much in manhood, to the violent athletic exercises of his youth. Indeed, the tattered clothes which his mother was obliged to repair every night, was the only cause of complaint which she could find in the generous boy, overflowing with health and spirit. As he grew older, shooting rabbits among the whins, and fishing in the Tweed, occasionally in the company of John Younger, the St Boswell's poet and essayist, were his favourite pastimes; and he delighted in wandering through the Eildon woods to watch the habits of birds and insects. His excursions sometimes extended to Williamslee, the sweet pastoral farm of his uncle, Mr Andrew Paisley, near Innerleithen, and to the St Ronan's games, held annually in that vicinity, where Professor Wilson and James Hogg, in the presence of the Earl of Traquair and a gallant company from the Forest, performed feats of strength and agility which far outstripped the

Flying Tailor of Ettrick. These were happy days, spent amid lovely scenes, and he often refers to them in his writings :—

“ Oh to be a boy once more,
Curly-headed, sitting singing
'Midst a thousand flowerets springing,
In the sunny days of yore,
In the sunny world remote,
With feelings opening in their dew,
And fairy wonders ever new,
And all the budding quicks of thought !
Oh to be a boy, yet be
From all my early follies free !
But were I skilled in prudent lore,
The boy were then a boy no more.”

“ Ah, yes ! ” he says in his old age ; “ the seeking of saugh wands and the weaving of creels ; the expeditions for hips and haws and sloes ; the first games of boglie about the stacks, and the first coming of the fox-hounds to Eildon Hills, made my boyish Octobers peculiarly cheery.”* Brothers and sisters were his companions on these joyous occasions—

“ Spilling rich laughter from their thriftless eyes,”

to use his own delightful words. He was always a great favourite with them, and sore were the hearts of the happy family when the day of parting came.

In 1816 Aird went to reside in Edinburgh, which

* Letter to his nephew, Mr T. Aird Smith, Riddleton Hill, Roxburghshire, 23d October 1874.

for nearly twenty years became his second home. There he attended the University, and made the acquaintance of Thomas Carlyle, his lifelong friend and correspondent. He was a member of the Dialectic Society, and exchanged to the last literary communings and kindly regards with Lord Deas and others, his old combatants in debate. In the middle of his studies he resided for several months, as tutor, in the family of Mr Anderson, farmer of Crosscleugh, in Selkirkshire, close to the famous hostelry of Tibbie Shiel, the paradise of anglers and tourists. Here he frequently met with the Ettrick Shepherd, and grew as much attached as Wordsworth to the green braes of Yarrow and St Mary's Loch, the peaceful beauty of which lingered fondly in his memory till his dying hour. Aird was designed by his relatives for the ministry of the Church of Scotland, for which he always entertained a profound and patriotic attachment. Before quite completing his academic course, however, he changed his purpose, owing to a feeling of personal diffidence, and embraced the freedom of a literary life. The loss of Aird to the noble service of the Church may be to many a subject of regret, but those who knew the sensitive nature of the man can understand how he shrank from a position involving so much prominence and responsibility. The quiet walks of authorship were more suited to his disposition, and there was a favourable opening at

this time. The fame of Edinburgh as a seat of learning was altogether unprecedented. The press was pouring forth year by year the unrivalled works of the author of 'Waverley;' the 'Edinburgh Review,' supported by Jeffrey, Brougham, Horner, Sydney Smith, and Cockburn, was carrying all before it; and 'Blackwood's Magazine' was about to start on its brilliant career, under Wilson, Lockhart, Hogg, De Quincey, and a host of celebrated names. In the literary circles of Edinburgh appeared also, from time to time, the greatest churchman since the days of Knox, the illustrious Chalmers. The metropolis was in a state of intellectual ferment, and the whole atmosphere was charged with electricity.

It was natural that a youth of capacity and ambition like Aird should wish to enter the listed field, and enrol his name among the immortals. His first venture, published in 1826, was entitled 'Murtzoufle; A Tragedy in Three Acts: with other Poems.' Though little regarded at the time, the volume displays unmistakable genius, and is remarkable for the maturity of mind exhibited by one who had only reached his twenty-fourth year. The single piece, "My Mother's Grave," has never been surpassed in elegiac verse, and deserves a place beside Cowper's imperishable lines. This exquisite poem breathes a spirit of yearning tenderness and intense yet restrained pathos, to be found nowhere else in the author's works, and might

have been written in tears of blood, so touching is the cry of filial agony over a parent's memory :—

“ Oh rise, and sit in soft attire !
Wait but to know my soul's desire !
I'd call thee back to earthly days,
To cheer thee in a thousand ways !
Ask but this heart for monument,
And mine shall be a large content !

Because that I of thee was part,
Made of the blood-drops of thy heart ;
My birth I from thy body drew,
And I upon thy bosom grew ;
Thy life was set my life upon ;
And I was thine, and not my own.

My punishment, that I was far
When God unloosed thy weary star !
My name was in thy faintest breath,
And I was in thy dream of death ;
And well I know what raised thy head,
When came the mourner's muffled tread ! ”

In 1827 Aird published his ‘Religious Characteristics,’ a prose composition of quaint imaginative power and exalted Christian tone. The work is divided into two parts. The first part contains six chapters, entitled Worldly-Mindedness ; Indecision ; Pride of Intellect ; Antipathy ; Christian Principles ; The Attainment of Christian Principles. Part second contains eight chapters, the subjects being : Charity of Education Enforced ; Need of Earliest Christian Education ; Man's Intellectual Character ; Habits of Intellectual and Moral Power ; Application of Know-

ledge and General Instruction ; First Points of Christian Discipline ; Christian Discipline Continued ; General Christian Education — Millennial Hopes. The style is somewhat marred by obscurities and involutions characteristic of the author, who was too anxious to condense his meaning within the narrowest space, forgetful of the Horatian warning—

“ Brevis esse laboro,
Obscurus fio.”

But there are many passages of great splendour and opulence, in which he rises far above the clouds to the loftiest heights of sacred eloquence :—

“ And of all habits this (Worldly-mindedness) is the meanest and most unworthy of man's immortal lights. How undignified the old age of such a man ! The old hills are renewed with verdure. Even the lava-courses are hid in time beneath vineyards. The dismantled tower of ages gains in veneration what it loses by literal decay. The pious old man bears on the venerable tablet of his forehead shadowed glimpses of the coming heaven. The old worldling—alas ! 'tis he ; of him is the contrast. There is no redeeming symbol or circumstance in his old age : the eye of cunning, still at its post, almost outliving decay ; the old hand, almost conquering by its unabated eagerness, the palsy of years—trembling in both ; still closing over gain ; mocking, in the stiffness of its muscles, the being's protracted delight to count over so much money his own, or sorrow to give so much away. . . .

“ Ye British mothers ! with a praise above your beauty, virtuous wives, honourable women ! to you is the high

distinction of being intrusted not only with the character of a mighty people on earth, but with the first elements of the kingdom of heaven. Remember the praise of the mother of the Gracchi and hers who gave her child to God,—the Hebrew mother who led his boyhood up to the Sanctuary. That little face that sleepeth his untroubled sleep! What find you in those untrodden lines only stirred by the faint manifestations of breathing life, for that tear which gathers slowly from a concentrated heart? Because that little map of peace may be disfigured by guilt;—because those lines may be heavily trampled, Sorrow in the hollow cheek, and Shame on the lean eyebrow. Nay, because he may rise in honour with God and man—mine own son—and blessed is the mother that bore him. O woman! as thou wouldst the latter and not the former; as thou wouldst lean on the shoulder of his noble manhood in presence of the people, with the impressive weakness of delight; as thou wouldst have his young foot haste like a silver arrow to do good;—know thy duty of first and best instruction according to the High Oracles. . . .

“Thou Mysterious Inhabitant on our earth! Incalculable Spirit, imbowed and enshrined in the form of our mortality! Jesus of Nazareth! who shall declare the simple but sublime glory of Thy life? With the countenance of a little child, what was in Thy heart! . . . The poet with his vague praises may turn to the setting sun; but for whose sake is this beauteous world kept up, and the sun shining on the just and the unjust? For Thine, for Thine, Jesus of Nazareth! Every sweet tone in nature comes forth from Thy responsibility. Every little singing-bird has in Thee more than a double creator. Thou art Alpha and Omega in the strangely-wrought song of Time and its spheres. There is in this

life no consistent alternative between a distinct denial of the divine and mediatorial attributes of this Being of Mercy, and the profoundest respect for His cause and commandments."

Aird was now brought into public notice. His book received a glowing eulogy in 'Blackwood' from Professor Wilson, who, from this time, became the fast friend of the author, and consulted with him repeatedly afterwards, particularly while writing his own fine papers on Spenser and Burns. Aird, who had recently made the acquaintance of Mr Blackwood, the eminent publisher, reviewed Pollok's 'Course of Time' in the same number of the Magazine,* and supported himself by private teaching and contributions to the periodicals. Upon the death of Mr James Ballantyne in 1832, he edited for a year the 'Edinburgh Weekly Journal,' in the property of which Sir Walter Scott once held an important share. On this occasion he received the following letter from Dr Moir, author of 'Mansie Wauch,' whose biography he was afterwards to write:—

"MUSSELBURGH, 12th Feb. 1833.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I take shame to myself for not having several days ago answered your kind note, informing me that you had accepted the editorship of the 'Weekly Journal.' I rejoiced most heartily to hear it, which I did a day or two before from Professor Wilson, and in the sincerity of my heart wish you every comfort,

* 'Blackwood,' June 1827.

success, and distinction in its management. I have no doubt that for some time you will find a thousand petty difficulties, but one by one these will disappear before the wand of experience, and week after week you will be enabled to step out more securely. Need I say, if there is any way in which I can at any time lend you a helping hand, that you have only to command my services. The hurry and bustle of a medical life, which makes no distinction between night and day, Sunday and Saturday, puts it out of my power to dedicate to literature much time; but I must be very hurried indeed if, at the request of a friend, a paragraph or two refused to be occasionally forthcoming."

In the midst of his avocations, Aird found leisure to explore the romantic environs of the metropolis—to visit the scenes of the 'Gentle Shepherd' at Habbie's Howe—and to attend, with the poet Motherwell, the great dinner at Peebles in honour of James Hogg, where Wilson presided. But his footsteps were directed more frequently to Roxburghshire when the summer came round. The glad welcome of his dear Border home was sweeter to him than all the laurels of Edinburgh, and eagerly did he accompany his brothers for a season to the "Old Scottish Village," close by the murmuring Tweed. At a certain turn in the road, the merry-hearted youths tossed their caps with shouts into the air, when the triple peaks of the Eildons burst upon their view—those wonderful hills which the wizard cleft in three, as if he meant them to be the wardens of the Border, and the special

guardians of Dryburgh, Melrose, and Abbotsford. In one of his recent poems, Aird thus describes their striking beauty:—

“ Above the mist the sun has kissed
Our Eildons—one, yet three :
The triplet smiles, like glittering isles
Set in a silver sea.
Break, glades of morn ; burst, hound and horn ;
Oh then their woods for me !”

In 1835 Aird finally left Edinburgh for Dumfries, and, upon the recommendation of Professor Wilson, became editor of the ‘Dumfriesshire and Galloway Herald,’ a weekly journal professing Conservative principles. In the practical management of the paper, he was loyally assisted by the publisher, Mr Craw ; and to the discussion of public questions he invariably imparted a high-bred honourable tone. Of his profession Aird entertained a lofty estimate. “The newspaper,” he said, “was the gospel of God’s daily providence working in man’s world ;” and in accordance with this high ideal he set himself to his task. By conviction he was a stanch supporter of Conservatism in Church and State, and when occasion required he could wield his pen with startling vigour, dismissing his subject and opponents in a few pithy and trenchant sentences. To quote his own confession, he was “no cheek-surrendering Quaker ;” and in the unhappy ecclesiastical disputes of 1843 even Hugh Miller felt the weight of his arm.

But controversy, after all, was too coarse an element for a nature so refined as his. The arena of party strife was not a congenial field for one whose heart was far away in the realms of poesy; and the 'Herald' became famous among journals for its literary reputation, rather than for its political authority. Its pages were enriched with some of his choicest verses and criticisms, and the generous editor was always glad to receive the contributions of the youthful talent which gathered around him. Many individuals who now occupy a conspicuous position in the Church, in medicine, and the law, were indebted to him for their first introduction to letters, and will remember with gratitude the training and encouragement which they got from their kind patron and friend. His correspondents hailed, as he used to say, "from the northern Tay to the classic Cam:" and amongst them may be mentioned the names of Dr Moir, the Delta of 'Blackwood's Magazine;' the Rev. George Gillfillan of Dundee; the Rev. Thomas Grierson of Kirkbean, author of 'Autumnal Rambles among the Scottish Mountains;' Mr Bell Macdonald of Rammerscales, the accomplished linguist; the Rev. Dr Duncan, Dumfries; Dr Ramage, Wallace Hall; Mr Thomas M'Kie, Advocate; Professor Charteris, Dean of the Chapel Royal; Dr Clyde; Mr Stewart of Hillside; Rev. J. W. Ebsworth; Dr Mercer Adam; the Rev. Dr Menzies of Hoddam, translator of

Tholuck's 'Hours of Devotion,' &c. Robert Burns, the eldest son of the bard, who bore a striking resemblance to his father, and inherited a share of his poetic talents, occasionally contributed verses to the paper. The following lines by the editor, among many more exquisite morsels, appeared in the columns of the 'Herald' without his name, and were never republished:—

MAY MORNING.

“May morn, how fresh and fair,
With dews and honey smells,
And sunny crystal air !
The little birds are at their carollings ;
The booming wild bee spins his airy rings :
Come forth and see. High hanging woods, the gleams
Of opening valleys with their branching streams,
White cities shining on the bending shore,
Away far fused the ocean's silver floor,
For thee shall glorify the hour,
Young Queen of Beauty, from thy virgin bower.”

Dumfries proved an attractive abode to one who was devoted to literature and to the contemplative life of the recluse. There are few fairer places in Scotland than the rare old town, called fondly by its citizens the Queen of the South. The ancient burgh, with a population of some 16,000 souls, sits on the left bank of the Nith, thirty-three miles to the north of Carlisle. The green hills of Galloway slope gently to the west, while from the rising ground you see the proud form of Skiddaw and the Cumberland range,

and catch a whiff of the Solway tide as it sweeps past Criffel and the Kirkcudbright shore. The town itself, which wears a quaint Continental air, is rich in Border memories and old-world associations, recalling the days when the Maxwells fought with the Johnstones, and the Stuarts with the House of Hanover. Prince Charlie's room in the Commercial Inn is still to be seen; Comyn's Court, off Friars' Vennel, where Bruce stabbed the traitor; the time-stricken Bridge, erected by the pious Lady Devorgilla; and College Street in the adjoining burgh of Maxwelltown, so honey-combed with subterranean passages, that Townshend, the clever detective officer, declared it to be as safe a hiding-place for a thief as the Seven Dials in London. Then, too, in the immediate vicinity, we have the noble castle of Caerlaverock, and the beautiful abbeys of Lincluden and Sweetheart. But the name of Burns is the glory of the district. Here he lived for upwards of five years, and here he died in 1796, and was buried in old St Michael's churchyard.

Aird took kindly to his adopted home, and soon learned to love its sweet river-walks, its glimpses of the sea, and sylvan beauties. Shunning society and its temptations, he courted the Muses in the shade, and the result of his studious life appeared in 1845 in the publication of 'The Old Bachelor in the Old Scottish Village.' This work brought Aird for the first time into general celebrity, and its charm consists in its admirable

prose delineations of Scottish character, and its descriptive sketches of the various seasons. The tales of the author, like his dramatic pieces, are defective in plot and construction, and do not possess the same interest for the reader, though containing memorable passages. Take this vivid description of October, his pet month in all the year, with its rustling breezes and whirling leaves :—

“ Having no dislike to the coming-on of winter, October is to me the most delightful month of the year. To say nothing of the beauty of the woods at that season, my favourite month is very often a dry one, sufficiently warm, and yet with a fine bracing air, that makes exercise delightful. And then what noble exercise for you in your sporting-jacket ! To saunter through the rustling woodlands ; to stalk across the stubble-field, yellow with the last glare of day ; to skirt the loin of the hill, and, overleaping the dyke, tumble away among the ferns, and reach your door just as the great, red, round moon comes up in the east,—how invigorating ! I say nothing of the clear fire within, and the new Magazine just laid on your table. Moreover, October is associated with the glad consummation of harvest-home, and all the fat blessings of the year—not forgetting the brewing of brown stout. Altogether, October is a manly, jolly fellow ; and that Spenser knew right well, as thus appears :—

‘ Then came October, full of merry glee ;
For yet his noule was totty of the must,
Which he was treading in the wine-fat’s sea ;
And of the joyous oil whose gentle gust
Made him so frolic.’

What fine, quaint, picturesque old words these are !”

b

In the following passage the Old Bachelor describes the witchery of the summer gloaming, and the strange *erie* feeling which creeps over him when he finds himself alone in the haunted Border-land, amid the mysterious silence and shadows of the night :—

“After our simple family devotions are over, I usually saunter forth to see the night. How still the stillness of the midsummer evening ! The villagers are all abed. The last tremblings of the curlew’s wild bravura have just died away over the distant fells into the dim and silent night. Nothing is now heard but the momentary hum of the beetle wheeling past, and, softened in the distance, the *craik* of the rail from the thick dewy clover of the darkening valley. The bat is also abroad, and the heavy moths, and the owl musing over the corn-fields; but, instead of breaking, they only solemnise the stillness. The antique houses of the hamlet stand as in a dream, and the trees gathered round the embowered church as in a swooning trance. In such a night, and in such an hour, the church bell, untouched of mortal hands, has been heard to toll drowsily. I feel a softening and sinking of the spirit; and hear the beating of my heart as if I were afraid of something, I know not what, just about to come out of the yawning stillness. Hurriedly I glide into the house, and bolt the door. And, when I lie down and compose myself on my bed, the fears of death creep over me.”

The ‘Old Bachelor’ was followed in 1848 by a full edition of his poems,* on which Aird’s fame as a man of genius principally rests. Of these the world has, with a sure instinct, singled out for its wonder and

* “Othuriel” and other poems were published in 1839.

admiration the "Devil's Dream on Mount Aksbeck." Here the poet put forth all his strength, and appeared as a consummate artist :—

"For in him were passion and music and power,
And he spake like a king in his conquering hour."

The "Devil's Dream" is a poem of daring originality, and, in point of epic grandeur, has often been compared with the "Inferno" and "Paradise Lost." Though only a fragment, it is a colossal one, and displays in its conception and terrific imagery the splendour of a bold imagination. There are single lines in it which seem to illuminate the page, as if written in characters of fire :—

"Above them lightnings to and fro ran crossing evermore,
Till, like a red bewildered map, the skies were scribbled o'er."

The poem opens with much magnificence :—

"Beyond the north where Ural hills from polar tempests run,
A glow went forth at midnight hour as of unwonted sun;
Upon the north at midnight hour a mighty noise was heard,
As if with all his trampling waves the Ocean were unbarred;
And high a grizzly Terror hung, upstarting from below,
Like fiery arrow shot aloft from some unmeasured bow.

'Twas not the obedient Seraph's form that burns before the
Throne,

Whose feathers are the pointed flames that tremble to be gone :
With twists of faded glory mixed, grim shadows wove his
wing ;

An aspect like the hurrying storm proclaimed the Infernal
King.

And up he went, from native might, or holy sufferance given,
As if to strike the starry boss of the high and vaulted heaven."

The picture of the Arch Fiend, in his ruin and his pride, chafing in vain against the iron bars of the universe; defying the Almighty to His face, yet impotent to resist His serene, inexorable will, is a sublime creation, and almost unique in literature:—

“ . . . O'er his head he saw the heavens upstayèd bright
and high;
The planets, undisturbed by him, were shining in the sky;
The silent magnanimity of Nature and her God
With anguish smote his haughty soul, and sent his Hell abroad.

His pride would have the works of God to show the signs of
fear,

And flying Angels to and fro to watch his dread career;
But all was calm: He felt night's dew upon his sultry wing,
And gnashed at the impartial laws of Nature's mighty King;
Above control, or show of hate, they no exception made,
But gave him dew, like aged thorn, or little grassy blade.”

Passing by “My Mother's Grave,” that marvellous product of Aird's youthful genius already referred to, we come to two noble poems, the “Demonic” and “Nebuchadnezzar,” and to his delightful “Summer Day” and “Winter Day,” “Frank Sylvan,” “The Swallow,” “The River,” and “The Holy Cottage.” He is always at home among the scenes of nature:—

“ Yet oh, from age to age, that we
Might rise a day old earth to see!
Mountains, high with nodding firs,
O'er you the clouded crystal stirs,
Fresh as of old, how fresh and sweet!
And here the flowerets at my feet.

Daisy, daisy, wet with dew,
And all ye little bells of blue,
I know you all; thee, clover bloom,
Thue the fern, and thee the broom:
And still the leaves and breezes mingle
With twinklings in the forest dingle.
Oh through all wildering worlds I'd know
My own dear place of long ago."

Sometimes, in the fewest strokes, he hits off a character or incident with inimitable point. The following picture of cottage life, entitled "Grandmother," and given here in its original and better form, is quite perfect in its way, a simple and touching vignette:—

"Far through the snows of winter come
To share his widowed Grannie's home,
The Orphan Boy lays down his head
Weary on his little bed.
Oft looking out, with modest fear,
He sees her anxious face severe,
Late at her work, as if 'twere due
To such a heavy burden new.
Her lamp put out, the clothes are prest,
How kindly, round his back and breast;
Her face to his, so loving meek,
He feels a tear drop on his cheek.
Sobbing, sobbing, all for joy,
Sobbing lies the Orphan Boy:
No more sorrow, no more fear,
Such power is in that simple tear!
Rise, morrow, rise! Upspringing he
Down to the death her help shall be."

It is to the honour of Thomas Aird that his poetry, as his life, was intensely religious and pure. To repeat the fine remark applied to him by Wilson, he was

“imbued with that deep devotion which was the power and the glory of so many of our divine men of old.” His genius was consecrated to themes of supreme interest for man; and it is natural to cherish the hope that, amid the wreck of human trivialities, his noble poems may survive and perpetuate the name of their author in the coming time :—

“ His ears he closed to listen to the strains
That Sion’s bards did consecrate of old,
And fixed his Pindus upon Lebanon.”

The present edition of the poems, which is the fifth, is now presented as corrected and arranged by the author’s hand, and contains several pieces which have not been previously published. Of these the chief are: “The Goldspink and Thistle;” “Our Young Painter;” “The Lyre;” “Monograph of a Friend;” and “The Shepherd’s Dog.”

In 1852 appeared Aird’s Life of Dr Moir, who expired while on a visit to his friend at Dumfries in the previous year. The work, which was undertaken on behalf of the family of the deceased, was a labour of love, admirably executed, and is interesting for its reminiscences of Galt, Warren, Macnish, Macginn, Michael Scott, Hamilton, and the later contributors to ‘Blackwood’s Magazine.’ Dr Carruthers of Inverness, a valued and accomplished friend, communicates the following interesting letter on the subject:—

"STRATHPEFFER, BY DINGWALL,
May 7, 1852.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The quiet little village from which I write this, is a sort of Highland Moffat, frequented in summer by the people of the north, who think their rheumatisms and other ailments much benefited by a few weeks' use of the spa water and inhalation of the fresh mountain air, free from active business, late hours, and dinner-parties. Among other idlers, my wife and I are here ; and as fortunately rain falls fast this forenoon, freshening the parched braes and shrivelled trees, I was beginning to feel somewhat dull and drowsy at the prospect of a long day without a walk, when luckily in came the post with three new volumes—your memoir and works of Delta, and Peter Cunningham's story of Nell Gwyn ! There could not be a greater contrast in the style and subject of books, but both were heartily welcome. Nell was the best and most Protestant of Charles's vile seraglio ; and Moir I had long loved and wished to hear something more of. His poetry I am not so much acquainted with as I should be, for I was in England during his best 'Blackwood' days ; and not seeing the magazine then, I lost some of his verse, and have not since had the resolution to bring up the arrear. However, now I have him *in extenso*, with the addition of your memoir, which, I need hardly say, I have just read at one sitting. What my impressions are after the perusal I shall tell you, without regard to method or sequence, as I will take up the book again more deliberately and carefully. I think you have done your part admirably, erring only on the side of *too little*, and not falling into the common sin of indiscriminate panegyric. Some of your brief illustrations and episodes have much

felicity of expression. Your allusion to Jeremy Taylor, for example (xxiii and xxiv), is very fine, and also the cento on Sculpture farther on in the memoir. Your estimate of Moir, personally and poetically, is also marked by sound discrimination. What an excellent man he seems to have been! so cheerful, active, and benevolent, and his well-balanced mind so alive to all the finer sensations and impulses of an imaginative nature, without neglecting one moral or social duty. I was not prepared to find such a solid substratum of homely common-sense. This is strikingly evinced in his remarks on Coleridge's monologues and Emerson's transcendentalisms. I suspect even Mr Carlyle would not have fared much better with him, though possessing more of the *carle-hemp* of man. I may mention to you that I have heard three remarkable men speak of Coleridge's oral philosophy in a very depreciatory style. These were Rogers, Campbell, and Allan Cunningham. Coleridge must, however, have been great at times, when he broke out from his metaphysical mist, and had a congenial auditor.

"Are you not wrong in your allusion to Swift at page lx? I have not access to books here, but I think the saying was applied to Sir John Denham, who was eulogised as coming out as a poet, like the Irish Rebellion, *threescore thousand strong*. Turn up Johnson and satisfy yourself. The exclamation about Hogg—'Ah, Hogg! ah, James! we miss you sadly'—rather jarred on my critical sense. Is it not too colloquial for the grave didactic page in which it appears? Look, also, at your concluding sentence. By putting Moir among such a crowd of names, so various in rank and general estimation, you give him no determinate place—in fact, bury him. You see I avail myself of our char-

tered *liberty of the press*—our editorial infallibility—with a vengeance.

“But I owe you many thanks, my dear sir, for your introduction to so lovable a man as Moir. I now seem to know him well, and I shall always think more highly both of him and his biographer. There is too often so much that is painful or disagreeable in the lives of authors—especially in the case of second-rate poets—that it is delightful to have so pure and unmixed a portraiture as that which you have presented the world with. It will give the deceased a fresh lease of popularity, and long operate as a bright and winning example.—Ever yours affectionately,

“ROBT. CARRUTHERS.”

Aird maintained to the last his early friendship with his distinguished countryman, Thomas Carlyle. They usually met every season in Dumfries, during the annual visits of the latter to his relatives in Scotland, and the two delighted to recall, in their pleasant interviews, the memories of bygone days. Mr Carlyle, whose courtesy I beg to acknowledge with profound gratitude and respect, has given me permission to publish the following correspondence with his friend :—

“5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, LONDON,
22d Jan. 1837.

“MY DEAR SIR,—. . . Thanks for the mute indications of remembrance we have often had from you. Go on and prosper ! that is always our wish (my wife’s and mine) for one whom we love well. The unspeak-

able *Book** is fairly at press, thank Heaven. In six weeks more my share of business with it will be over for ever and a day! It will be worth little to most men, to all men: except to me the incalculable worth of *troubling me no more*. I saw Gordon since I saw you. My kind remembrances to him."

"TEMPLAND,† 5th Aug. 1839.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You were expected here on Friday last; by me rather more confidently than perhaps your last words warranted; by Mrs Welsh and others more confidently still than that report of mine,—with a confidence of certainty namely;—Hope telling us all his usual 'flattering tale!' Dr Russel was invited here to dine with you on Friday and had to dine *without* you; Dr Mundell of Wallace Hall had an invitation left for you to dine on Saturday, &c. &c.; and it was all a mere misreport and misapprehension of reports of *the oral utterance of man*, a most imperfect organ for representing the Future with, for even explaining the present with! Your letter arrived on Saturday morning with the newspaper, for which and its predecessor many thanks. Dr Russel, we learn, is also apprised of your true movements now. I grieve to say that on Friday next I have but little chance to be here. I am to be in Annandale on Wednesday or Thursday; so roll the bowls,—perversely for us. But my wife will be here, right glad to see you, and Mrs Welsh, and other friends. I hope to see you in passing through Dumfries some time after Friday; and that after Friday the future will not

* The 'French Revolution' was published in 1837.

† Near Thornhill in Dumfriesshire.

be poorer than the past has been, but richer, as it may well be.

"I am not so well in health as I expected; nor is my wife at all very well. We must do the best we can. This piece of the Universe called Nithsdale, in this section of Eternity called August 1839, is very beautiful; doubly beautiful to me whose head has long simmered half-mad with brick wildernesses, dust, smoke, and loud-roaring confusion that meant little. Good be with you, my good friend.—Yours always truly,

"T. CARLYLE."

"5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, 20th Jan. 1840.

"DEAR MR AIRD,—It is only half an hour since your kind present, dated Christmas, arrived here. I have not a single moment to myself at present. I know not how many people all *talking* round me, &c. &c., but it seems better to write you the message that your book has arrived, has been welcomed, and lies waiting judgment,—not waiting good and best thanks from both of us. On the whole, I am right glad to see you in independent print again; and though I like Prose better than Poetry (sinner that I am), and read very little of the latter, I must except anything in the one style or the other from friend Aird. Why should you not write to me now that it costs only a penny? With many compliments, wishes, and thanks."

"5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, 1st May 1840.

"DEAR MR AIRD,—Accept many thanks for your long kind letter; a welcome proof of your remembrance of us. When you read the inclosed Program,* and think

* Lectures on Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, No. 1., May 1840.

that my day of *execution* ('Do not hurry, good people; there can be no sport till I am there!') is fixed for Tuesday first, you will see too well the impossibility of writing any due reply. Alas, I am whirling; the sport of viewless winds! It is the humour I always get into, and cannot help it. Some way or other in four weeks more we shall be through the business; and hope not to resume it in a hurry. For lecturing, as indeed for worldly felicity in general, I want two things, or perhaps one of them, either of them would bring the other with it and suffice: Health and impudence. We must do the best we can; and 'be thankful' always, as an old military gentleman used to say, 'that we are not in Purgatory.' We noticed Gordon's* promotion, with pleasure, in the 'Herald.' I have never heard a word from the man himself; he will suit the business well, and the business him;—a good honest soul as is in all Scotland or any other land. You are happy to be in green quiet places: for me, ah me! I am here in the whirlwind of every kind of smoke, dust, din, and inanity; 'I can't get out!' We shall meet if we can this summer; but it is uncertain, like all things.—Yours always,

"T. CARLYLE.

"P.S.—My wife is now pretty well; improving always with the progress of the sun. We had the coldest March and the hottest April I can remember. I say nothing of Ithuriel† at present, tho' so much were to be said! You will write a right Prose Book one day! I always hope that Poetry is out;—is not the very Bible in prose?"

* H.M. Inspector of Schools.

† Aird's poem "Othuriel."

"CHELSEA, 14th Nov. 1845.

"DEAR AIRD,—I will attend well to what you say about Gilfillan; and certainly if I can do him any good on such an occasion, it will be a duty as well as a pleasure to me. My personal connection with Reviews, &c., has altogether ceased, for a long while; nor indeed is there any very clear way of seeking to give furtherance to a man of real merit, amid the crowd of empty pretenders and of false judges that we have at present. But it is the more incumbent on one to do what is possible; and in that I will endeavour not to fail as occasion serves. . . . Reviews, I believe, do little good nowadays, except by the *extracts* they give, which keep alive some memory of the Book till people judge of it for themselves. Our address for the next two or three weeks is—Hon. W. B. Baring, Bay House, Alverstoke, Hants (we are setting out thither for a little more of the country to-morrow). Or Chelsea, the old address, will always find us after a short delay. John* is still 'gravitating' towards you; will alight in Dumfries, I believe, by-and-by—when the fogs have become heavy enough. He is very busy with Dante, &c., at present, and seems lazy to move. This, in spite of its fogs, is the Paradise of 'men at large,' this big Babylon of ours.

"We have in the evenings gone over the 'Old Bachelor in his Scottish Village,' and find him a capital fellow of his sort. The descriptions of *weather* and rural physiognomies of nature in earth and sky seem to me excellent. More of the like when you please!

"My wife sends many kind regards to you; take many good wishes from us both.—Yours always very sincerely,

T. CARLYLE."

* Mr Carlyle's brother, Dr Carlyle.

"CHELSEA, 15th Nov. 1848.

"MY DEAR AIRD,—I have received your volume of poems: many thanks to you for so kind and worthy a gift, and for the kind and excellent letter which came to me the day after. I have already made considerable inroads into the 'Tragedy of Wold,' and other pieces: I find everywhere a healthy breath as of mountain breezes; a native manliness, veracity, and geniality which, though the poetic form, as you may know, is less acceptable to me in these sad times than the plain prose one, is for ever welcome in all 'forms,' and is, withal, so rare just now as to be doubly and trebly precious. But your delineations of reality and fact are so fresh, clear, and genuine when I have met you in that field, that I always grudge to see such a man employ himself in fiction and imagination,—when the 'reality,' however real, has to suffer so many abatements before it can come to me. Reality, very ugly and ungainly often, is nevertheless, as I say always, *God's* unwritten poem, which it needs precisely that a human genius should *write* and make *intelligible* (for it would then be beautiful, divine, and have all high and highest qualities) to his less-gifted brothers! But what then? Gold is golden, howsoever you coin it; into what filigree soever you twist it. I know gold when I see it, one may hope. For the rest, 'a wilful man must have his way.' And, indeed, I know very well I am in a minority of one with this precious literary creed of mine, so cannot quarrel with your faith and practice in that respect. Long may you live to employ those fine gifts in the way your own conscience and best deliberated insight suggests!

"Your new lodging, commanding a view of Troqueer and the river, must be a welcome improvement on the former, which was of the street streetish: the very sound

of the *Could** is a grateful song to one's heart; whispering of rusticities and actualities; singing a kind of lullaby to all follies and evil and fantastic thoughts in one! You speak of my getting back to Scotland: such an imagination dwells always in the bottom of my heart; but, alas! I begin often to surmise that it is but perhaps imaginary, after all; that I am grown a pilgrim and sojourner, and must continue such till I end' it! That shall be as it pleases God.

"I get very ill on with all kinds and degrees of work in late days; in fact, the aspect of the world, from one end of it to the other, especially this last year, is hateful and dismal, not to say terrible and alarming, and the many miserable meanings of it strike me dumb. The 'general Bankruptcy of Humbug' I call it; Economics, Religions, alike declaring themselves to be *Mene Mene*; all public arrangements among men falling as one huge *confessed* Imposture, into bottomless insolvency, Nature everywhere answering, 'No effects!' This is not a pleasant consummation; one knows not how to speak of this all at once, even if it had a clear meaning for one!—Good be with you, dear Aird. Tell my sister you have heard from me, and that she must write.—Yours ever truly,

T. CARLYLE."

Professor Wilson, then in search of information for his essay on Burns, visited Dumfries in October 1840, and writes to Aird on his return to Edinburgh. The death of his wife had saddened his brilliant spirit by this time, and given a pensive colouring to that eloquence which Hallam compares to "the rush of mighty waters:"—

* Weir across the Nith.

"MY DEAR MR AIRD,—We arrived all safe at Gloucester Place about 8 o'clock. From Thornhill to Edinburgh it rained incessantly, but not heavily, all the way. Goliah was sheltered by the luggage, but we were all sorely crushed by increasing population. For some days I suffered from sore throat and cold, but am myself again, though my former self nevermore. I find that, much to my annoyance, I have to deliver an address at the opening of the Philosophical Association on the 10th, I believe, of November, on what nobody can tell me, nor do I at present know. Would you turn the matter over in your mind, and in a few days tell me in the form of a letter or letters anything that may occur to you thereon. A few hints on any subject often suffice to set my thoughts aflow. A pitcher or two of water may fang the well. What I want is some heads or *τοπι* on which to dissert a little. Try to give me your opinion, and I will try to construct a passable panegyric. I send you the report of a large assemblage last week. The directors besought me to give the memory of Pitt, and then, without meaning any disrespect to him or me, placed it 18th on the list; so that when it came to me, it was past 10 o'clock at night. I know too well what a hopeless task it would be for Mercury to start at that hour to an exhausted audience, so I flung twenty minutes of an intended speech overboard, and confined myself to what you will see. I believe my good sense was appreciated by all, though at the time some thought I might have spoken longer. As it was, it was better received than the able rhetoric of Macaulay. I was happy to see you, and to see you well and happy.—Yours affectionately,

JOHN WILSON."

The Rev. George Croly, whom Aird calls "the

brave old Irishman," is well known as the author of 'Salathiel,' and a contributor to 'Blackwood.' He thus expresses to Aird his opinion of some modern poetry, in terms at once vigorous and refreshing :—

" LONDON, 25th Feb. 1856.

" I have this morning received your very obliging note, and will have great pleasure in receiving your volume, which I presume is still on the way. I have seen hitherto only fragments of your works, the *disjecta membra poetae*, which gave me a high anticipation of the treat that is reserved for me in the perusal of the whole. Our very clever friend Gilfillan and I differ in some points with respect to poetry. He seems to be captivated by the mystical, oracular, half-cloudy and half-meteoric poetry of the 'Festus' school. He may be right, but I find it difficult to delight in what I cannot at all comprehend, where every sentence is an enigma, and every figure is so swathed in eccentricity of epithet, that I can discover neither visage nor limb. I am heretic enough to think that '*communi sensu plane caret*' is a formidable drawback, and that to be intelligible to common capacities is at least a matter that common capacities may be fairly entitled to require. It always seems to me that haziness of expression is connected with weakness of conception. The Gods even of Homer never wrap themselves in clouds, but when they can no longer stand and brave the open field."

Professor Blackie also writes in a strain which would have cheered the heart of Croly and of the author of 'Firmilian : '—

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"EDINBURGH, 43 CASTLE STREET, 4th March.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Accept my best thanks for your poems which I value highly. I am a true Greek with regard to the divine art, and consider that poetry is only another mode of wisdom and health, and whatever qualities it has, may not want that fine music and harmony which belongs to these. I am a decided enemy of the '*spasmodic* school,' as my friend Aytoun calls it—of all poetry however sublime, and however intense, and however brilliant, that is not wise, healthy, and moderate. I need not say that I value yours very highly, for it is entirely free from that tone of exaggeration and morbid excitement which mars the enjoyment of so much of the versified thought and feeling of the present day.

"I am very much blocked up at present, and have no freedom to float at ease upon the sunny waves of your verse; but I mean to run wild among the Highland hills when the summer comes, and shall not forget to take your happy volume in my pocket.

"When you come to Edinburgh, be sure to knock me up,—And believe me ever yours sincerely,

"J. S. BLACKIE."

"I have many pleasant recollections," writes Mrs Smith, of Whitehaven, Mr Aird's attached niece, "of long country walks with my uncle, and how in the evenings he would saunter up and down in the old long room overlooking the Cauld, composing as he sauntered. By-and-by he would sit down and write out his thoughts; then say to me, 'Listen now, darling.' And he would read over what he had

written, and ask if I noted the points he wished brought out, and to which he had called my attention when walking together. Next morning I would hear him pacing his bedroom an hour or two earlier than usual ; and perhaps, after breakfast, I would be called upon to listen to the same thought expressed more fully and clearly. And so he went on, carefully pruning away every unnecessary word, until the point or thought was clear and distinct as a picture."

Except the necessary paragraphs once a-week for his paper, Aird wrote little after fifty years of age, partly owing, perhaps, to his secluded habits, and partly to circumstances of health. In appearance he was a strong man, of a tall and handsome person, with a beautiful head and striking presence. Like his own "Frank Sylvan," he lived much in the open air ; and his notable figure, which attracted the attention of the stranger, proclaimed the athlete of younger days. But the active frame was united to a high-strung nervous temperament, which unfitted him for continuous labour, and made him painfully sensitive to varied forms of suffering. Sleeplessness, arising from several causes, particularly from cock-crowing, was for many years the bane of his life ; and though he would smile good-humouredly when the enemy was gone, the consequences at the time were sufficiently serious. "I lie down," he said to me, "in a state of expectancy,

and, just when I am going to fall over into delicious slumber, some creature of the night (cock or cat) is sure to raise aloft its voice, and drive me to distraction." At this time he was in a state of extreme depression,—“on the brink,” as he expressed it, “of madness and despair,”—owing to the want of sleep, which he had courted for several nights in vain at the houses of various friends; and it was not till he fled to a quiet suburb of the town that he obtained the wished-for repose. But the calm succeeds the storm; and when his spirits had leisure to rise again, he would tell the story of his wrongs with inimitable effect, pouring maledictions on his tormentors, the ill-omened birds and chartered libertines of the night. He used to say that Mr Carlyle suffered from the same nocturnal grievances, and when living in Edinburgh, went to reside for the sake of peace in the outskirts of the city, whence, however, he was speedily routed by the cries of defiance which rang from farmyard to farmyard. Even in his poems he returns to the charge, and, half in jest, half in earnest, vows vengeance on the whole feathered tribe, with graphic and irresistible humour:—

“Lo ! chanticleer, his yellow legs well spurred,
Leads forth his dames along the strawy ways.
He claps his wings; he strains his clarion throat,
His blood-red comb inflamed with fiercer life,
And crows triumphant: Soul-distressing sound,
When in the pent-up city, ill at ease,

Your keen and nervous spirit cannot sleep,
Hearing him nightly from some neighbouring court !
Oft have we wished the gallinaceous tribe
Had but one neck, and that were in our hands
To twist and draw : the morrow's sun had risen
Upon a cockless and a henless world.
And yet the fellow there, so bold of blast
To sound the morn, to summon Labour up,
Is quite a social power : we'll let him live."

It is thus he writes to Mr Smith, of Whitehaven, on his return to Dumfries, after an unlucky visit to Cumberland :—

" 23d June 1856.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—I travelled on defeated yet dogged, and went *slaistering* [bedaubed] down to Mountain Hall in the evening. However, I slept ten hours of blessed sleep, and thus stayed at once one of those fits which defy opiates now, and fill my soul with terror. It was a vast imprudence to venture from home so soon after my late harrowing up. And how I do smile (well pleased) at you healthy unconscious people who could not tell me, in answer to my preliminary inquiry, that the Philistines were to be upon me. I have received your note with Mr R.'s theory of supper. The only theory for me is darkness and quiet. With them I can sleep better than the most of people. Without them, all the cheese in Holland and all the porter in London would do little for me."

The Rev. George Gilfillan of Dundee, a dear and intimate friend of the author, has most kindly favoured me with a perusal of Aird's correspondence with him, extending over a period of thirty years.

The following extracts will serve to show, amongst other matters of interest, the soundness of his critical judgment upon literary questions, as well as the masculine vigour of his style :—

“ DUMFRIES, *8th Feb.* 1841.—REV. AND DEAR FRIEND,—
 . . . As I merely glance at provincial journals, I did not observe the strictures on you in the ——. Such gross malignity can do you only good, and no harm. To the man who has written such a paper on Coleridge immediately after such a diatribe, I need not say—Courage ! Take no notice whatever of the vermin. Neither he nor all the world can touch a hair of your head, if you be true to yourself. ‘The great soul of the world is just.’ Thanks to dear Billy of Avon for that. My first impression was to add a Note of my own to your papers on Coleridge; and unless he were made of cast-metal, I think I could make the creature blush. But now I see it is far better to let your papers soar away in their own silent magnanimity, and tell their own quiet story of you, and abash the puny detractors. You are now quite safe from anything he can say against you. Moreover, as venom seems his spirit, he might rejoice to return to the subject in answer to my Note. . . . As I am no cheek-surrendering Quaker, however, I may think it my duty . . . to call the fellow to account. It will help me all the better to do it well that you have before then got acquainted with Christopher North. . . . I fear human nature is no better anywhere else than at ——. Many a time have I thanked that terrible old fellow, Bentley, for saying in the rushing face of every ninth wave of his many calamities, ‘Well, I think I have got through worse than this yet.’ So, courage with old Bentley !”

"*25th Feb. 1842.*—Let me now first of all acknowledge 'Brougham and Vaux,' who comes from your hand, I think, in 'strength and state.' You have missed none of the great lineaments, and you have ploughed them all out deep and strong. The finer peculiarities appear also under nice discrimination. Thus much in the meantime by way of praise. Now for fault-finding. I differ from you entirely as to that going down upon his knees in the House of Lords, which in my mind was a bit of the most wretched melodramatic ever enacted—only, not just so bad as Burke's dagger. Ay, think of a man like Burke actually with malice prepense getting the dagger—probably buying it—for the purpose, stowing it away in his breast, and arranging all his speech to get the flinging down done at the proper time! Pitiful trash of a trick!"

"*16th May 1842.*—Dr Cook, our Moderate leader, has been in this quarter, and I have seen him once or twice. He is a kindly and dear old man—not at all what you would suppose him. Fonder of his grandchildren, I assure you (for his only daughter is married at Lochmaben), than of the battles of the Kirk. He is a most lovable old man, and what a gentleman withal!"

"*22d April 1843.*—I have been sauntering for some time reading Alfred Tennyson's poems, and other light matters. Alfred's brother lent me his poems. Beautiful they are certainly, strong and manly often, but oftener capricious, silly, and affected. 'Godiva' was a most difficult affair certainly, yet treated with what perfect grace and beauty! Reserving June for my visit to Bowden and Dundee (probably), I give you all the rest of the summer to choose your time for visiting our valley.

My only condition is, that you are not to stay with me less than a month. So, make your arrangements as you please. Pray write me again, and don't forget to tell me how poor Nicol is. Also let me know of Brown."

"*12th June 1843.*—Your letter from Old Comrie was unexpected, and therefore the more pleasing. But in the name of kitty wren and hawthorn blossom, why can't you enjoy the green society of nature, and the simple quiet of our 'Old Scottish Village,' without considering a set of sympathetic chaps about you, effervescing or intense? Would I had old Bowden for four or five months in the year, on the dullest terms you could name. It has not yet got beyond thinking all 'these writing chaps' little better than a crew of good-for-nothing ne'er-do-weels, and I hope never will.

I think you take a right view of the whole matter, in wishing to be very very reasonable about that affair of the sermon. And pray reinforce your manly intention with this consideration: Your Associate Body is shaken just now with speculative innovations of opinion; therefore be not angry that it is more than usually jealous about all freedoms, even in the degree of your own. Bear with it accordingly. . . . There is much pedantry in the formulas of all Churches; but it is not a safe thing to let them be transgressed. Your duty is clear, accordingly; and pray don't talk of 'victimisation,' 'personal enemies,' and so forth. There can be nothing of the kind ever towards you by any that know you. When I first saw your clear, open, candid face, 'There's a heroic chap,' said I to myself—'there's a magnanimous chap, who will communicate strength and sweetness to the life of all round about him.' Such, I am certain, is the true function of your goodly nature. . . . Depend upon it,

you have no personal enemies : no man would have one like you be a victim. I beg of you to let me know the end of the matter. I could quarrel with you also about the state of the country, but I have chid enough for one letter. The sun has not done a right day's work for the last month, but the fellow has not lost his faculty, for here he is out to-day. Neither has Great Britain : the present clouds are nothing to what she has come through. She will yet 'shine and save'—God bless her!—and make us all (her much-endowed, much-blessed sons) ever hopefully, fearlessly, determinedly thankful."

"*3d August 1844.*—I would not care a fig for Jeffrey, not having seen your MSS. You have seen already, from the failure of — and — to serve you, that booksellers will persist in taking their own way. Try a few of them fairly, and if you don't succeed, keep your MSS. snug in your bureau till some future time. Meantime and always, our happiness must mainly depend on our own self-contained consciousness of doing the practical duty of our respective stations. Dr Carlyle is here just now. He has some thought of visiting Mr Erskine of Linlathen, and, if so, will see you. I go to Ayr on Monday, but care little about it. It is not in my way at all. If you have a vacant hour this autumn, pray give me a little 'Twaddle on Tweedside.'"

"*23d September 1846.*—I have just read Landreth's review of 'Pollok' in Hogg's last number. He has done it well—very; and is evidently a clever fellow. I shall be very happy to have your notice of him for our next paper. What profession is he of? I trust (according to Sir Walter's distinction of terms) literature is his crutch, not his staff.

"I have got back from Moffat, and am jog-trotting in as usual, ruminating somewhat, but doing nothing. I have characters and incidents for a romantic drama; but the plan is too scattered somehow, and does not exactly please me. . . . I missed Carlyle when I was away at Moffat. He could sleep none in Scotland, and fled back to London, where he has done nothing but sleep. How I sympathise with him!"

"*12th August 1848.*—What a glorious 12th of August! Would I were with you among the heather—unclerical Mantons apart! It seems a passion with every Scotchman to dip his foot among the blooms. — left Dumfries greatly pleased with his reception here. His poetry is very juvenile and thin; but there is mettle in that face and head of his, and I think he will make a good preacher. But, oh, what Lenten ware it must be at best without the Incarnation of Deity! Since God put the faculties of Shakespeare and all his affections in a piece of clay, it is not wonderful to me that He has taken our nature upon Him, to hold kindly intercourse with the noble creatures whom He has thus fashioned. It would be more wonderful to me otherwise. Oh the dry, marrowless bones of Socinianism! Pray write me now and tell me how Mrs Gilfillan is, and how you are yourself, and what doing. You have heard, of course, of James's intended marriage. The youngsters are leaving me stranded high and dry—

'Here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling.'

"*18th Nov. 1848.*—I had also this week a right hearty letter from Carlyle. He had marched into the bowels of my volume, and is much pleased. This praise is accept-

able to me. I will show you the encouraging letter some future day.

"You don't know Samuel Fergusson of Dublin? I sent him a copy of my book; but it had not reached him when he wrote me the other day. He has succeeded, as counsel, in getting Williams of the 'Tribune' off; and I trust it will be a shoeing-horn to draw on gowden shoes. He has got married, and must work hard at the law; but Themis has not won his heart yet. He is determined still to have a dash at poetry. He is a fellow of rare powers, and I expect great things from him. . . .

"If, in your meditations dealing with the hearts of matters, any theme of deep tragic interest strikes you, pray let me know of it. I fear I am not the [man] now to execute much; but I have notions yet of new walks in the drama on high mountain-tops. Life is too short for us, and it is sorely nibbled away by small cares; yet well for us, perhaps. Work away, and sing courageously as you work."

"*1st January* 1849.—Cholera is almost off from us now; but we have already lost one in thirty of our population—a rate of mortality which would be equivalent to 10,000 in such a city as Glasgow; so you see how mild the visitation is there, compared with the stroke on our poor devoted town."

"*1st Feb.* 1849.—I have just had an hour with Gordon, the inspector of schools. He tells me that 'The Caxtons' in 'Blackwood' is by Bulwer Lytton. Can it be possible? No piece of modern writing has charmed me more. Can Sir B. L. really do such things? W. E. Aytoun is to be married to Professor Wilson's third and last daughter, Jane. All this is building him round with

new life, and yet it is leaving him lonelier too. The death of a betrothed maiden is to me peculiarly affecting. With what profound and beautiful pathos do the old Greeks lament it in their inscriptions and other anthology. No wonder! How exquisitely applicable Virgil's words in such a case—

'Sed duræ rapit inclementia mortis'!

Oh the force of that *sed*! Poor Robert — will need all the consolation you can give him. Peace and good be with him and all of you."

"7th July 1849.—DEAR FRIEND,—I am grieved to hear of Mrs Gilfillan's serious illness, and the severe accident which has befallen yourself. To both of you I send my earnest wishes for your speedy, complete restoration. Rest completely, if you possibly can, from all work for a month or so, and the bruise will have the less irritability to feed it, and will pass off all the sooner. Your mind, moreover, will be freshened by the pause. Keep in view that you have been working hard for a series of years: see that you don't press the fine springs too much. . . I agree with you to a hair about the 'Northern Days.'* The old fun will never more be forthcoming, but the series may be made to embody much high eloquence, taking in all the best part of the lectures. When this is done, he should stop for ever, and gather up and arrange (adding and eking) all the *spolia opima* of his genius which are lying scattered about. I re-read lately his 'Unimore.' Do but read it again for yourself. What mines of matter in it! I have just finished reading over once more the morsels of criti-

* Wilson's "Dies Boreales."

cism in Campbell's specimens. There is a want of generosity about them; but some of them are exquisite. To Collins, for instance, he ascribes a 'rich economy of expression haloed with thought'—isn't it fine? I have spent some pleasing hours this week with Dr John Carlyle. He is well, and full of pleasant talk. Thomas is expected in Scotland this autumn."

"*25th July* 1850. — Your letter is dew to my dull, dry time. Many thanks. On you I can always count. . . . This gnarled, snarled Bulldog of the North, who has had a deadly grip of my sinews for the last three months, is slackening his fangs in the sun, and I am now hirpling tolerably by our river-side; but I have not heard the cuckoo this year. If my locomotives go on improving slowly, I still look forward to seeing you about the end of August, if not the middle.

"Tell Yendys, when next you write to him, the severe rheumatic obstruction which has kept me from acknowledging his last kind communication, and give him my best regards. He is a very fine fellow. I was puzzled about the authorship of that paper of his in the 'Palladium.' I could think of nobody but Brown, and yet could not satisfy myself that Brown it was. I presume the paper on Carlyle was by the editor himself, Wight, sharp and clever enough, but devoid of the rich inner man. You know what I mean.

"You naturally think the articles on Moffat are by myself. Not so. They are written by my friend Grierson, the minister of Kirkbean, one of the greatest mountain-climbers of the age.

"I rejoice to hear of your literary progress and success; but I reserve it all for our rest under the pear-tree of Paradise."

"21st Dec. 1850.—MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . Certain things should never be named, even for condemnation. That Byronism [Byron's 'bit of blasphemy'] about 'Carnage' is precisely such a thing. Why not let it sink out of sight to Tartarus? Why immortalise it in heavenly

'Amber and colours of the showery arch'?"

"3d July 1851.—Some little family adjustments call me over to Roxburghshire in the end of this month, so I have been obliged to postpone my visit to Dundee. . . . I trust you will enjoy your trip to London, and enrich your mind with a hundred suggestive points. In that *nidus* they won't be long in ripening. Our summer here is now beautiful; but to me a shadow is in it from the deplorable illness of my friend and neighbour, Archie Hamilton. His heart is extensively diseased, and cannot send the blood with sufficient force through his large body. A deposit of water is the consequence, and it will drown him ere long. How he does labour for breath in the flood!"

Mr Hamilton was a solicitor in Dumfries and an elder of the Church, conspicuous for his portly presence and genial character. At his death he bequeathed a large Bible to Mr Aird, who records the gift on the opening page in these words: "My friend Archibald Hamilton died on 4th August 1851, and this Bible came into my possession accordingly. Our blessed Lord help me to read it with profit."

"2d Oct. 1851.—A curse on magazine writing, which

looks to the present and forgets futurity! I am just about to begin a short memoir. Could you kindly send me what letters you had from Moir, that I may make a discreet use of them? I had a day of Carlyle lately. He is well. Browning and he are off to France. He gave me a private reading of his 'Sterling.' It is very able and interesting; but it might have been as well to let the poor forlorn 'sheet-lightning' die away in its cloud."

"*27th January 1852.*—When was I in such arrears with you before? But I have been kept depressed and reluctant to work with this painful affection of my heart. Delta's proofs are still coming upon me; and I have been in constant intercourse with the Crichton Institution for some weeks, in consequence of the terrible seizures of a poor friend of mine there, and the visits of his Edinburgh relatives. All this, with my usual weekly work, has been quite enough for me. My brother James told me of you the other day. I am specially thankful to hear that Mrs Gilfillan is so well now. Spring will be upon us immediately, and dibble and hoe in her eident hand. And you, G. G., down with your pen and out to the 'paidle' an hour every morning and evening. . . . I share your zeal about Croly. Poor fellow! I am sorry to hear he is in very bad health. Lockhart, also, has been very unwell. The 'Critic,' I am afraid, wants body and substance. The last No. is exceedingly poor. That alms-basket of critical scraps won't do. Tell me, when you write, not only of yourself, but of Dobell and all the worthies. Tennyson, I am told, has a large poem on hand. I have a little piece in the forthcoming 'Blackwood.' 'A simple thing, but mine own,' quod Touchstone. We have been drowned

with floods ; but I expect to hear the laverock to-morrow."

"*17th January 1854.*—Your account of the Stirling meeting tickled me greatly. I have ordered a copy of the 'Eclectic.' My interest in Wilson, and my affection for him, deepen as his life runs low. . . . Give my kind regards to Yendys when you see him. Balder is not yet THE POEM. He has been sowing bolls of pearls and 'bags of fiery opals' in the desert of Sahara. I am provoked at a chap of such powers not knowing better."

"*2d April 1856.*—I have just received your note. Many thanks for all your great kindness. In the continued exercise of it, do not fail to see my brother James as often as you can, and cheer him up, poor fellow ! . . . I have had a very severe go of sore throat and bronchitis, and am still mainly confined to the house. Oh for 'the dew-dropping south' ! Sarah and her little body were to have been with me on Monday ; but she, too, has influenza.

"Amidst all my snivelling, I have exchanged kind notes with Kingsley, and David Masson, and Dr Waller of Dublin ; and long friendly letters with James Hannay (who is a very rising chap, and will lend lustre to good old Dumfries), and Professor Blackie, and Samuel Ferguson—author of 'The Forging of the Anchor,' and a man who had it in him to be the greatest poet of the time. Our own Samuel, too—dear Brown—dictated for me a short and affectionate note. I hope Mrs Gilfillan is not suffering from this intergrilling, interchilling of summer and winter in one."

"*25th August 1856.*—MY DEAR FRIEND,—Cats and hens have carried the day, or rather the night, against

me, and I am off to Mountain Hall, a villa not far from Dr Browne's upper gate. I flitted on Saturday: a pony-cart carried my whole gear—the gatherings of twenty-one years—so my organ of acquisitiveness cannot be very large. My Tusculum is a charming one in fine weather; but in winter it will be dull, I fear, and rather inconvenient for me. I must just do the best I can. Would I were nearer you! The Rev. Arthur P. Stanley, the biographer of Arnold, with two young Oxonians, was here on Friday. They brought a note of introduction from a friend in Moffat, and I had much pleasure in showing them the antiquities of our town. Stanley is a little man, upwards of forty, with grizzled hair, thoughtful and somewhat careworn aspect, soft moist eyes, and mild quiet manners—quite the Christian gentleman of the English Church. His companions, Lushington and Shairp, were very fine fellows also."

Aird was much gratified by a public entertainment, which was given on the 11th of May 1847, to one of the most popular men in Dumfriesshire, Mr John M'Diarmid, the proprietor and editor of the 'Courier.' Mr James Stuart Menteath, younger, of Closeburn, occupied the chair, supported by the leading gentlemen of the town and district. Aird took an active part in the proceedings, and proposed a congenial toast, "Success to the Drama." Though politically opposed to the guest of the evening, he never allowed party feeling to interfere with his private intercourse and personal esteem. On the contrary, writing soon afterwards to Dr Carruthers of Inverness, who was

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prevented from being present, he described the meeting as a triumphant one, over which he rejoiced, in compliment to his friend and brother journalist.

Dumfries, like Stratford-upon-Avon and Dryburgh, is memorable as the burial-place of the mighty dead, and a shrine to which pilgrims from all lands resort continually in streaming and enthusiastic crowds. It contains the mausoleum of Robert Burns, and many memorials of his family and history, which possessed a deep personal interest for Aird. He went to reside there only a few months after the death of the poet's widow, and became intimately acquainted with three of his sons, and several of his contemporaries. For Burns himself he entertained the profoundest admiration, ranking him among the greatest minds in natural force and originality of genius. Of the errors and infirmities of the man he seldom spoke, regarding these as shadows passing over a noble picture, upon which it was ungenerous to enlarge. There is a striking chapter in the pages of the 'Old Bachelor,' in which the author pays a glowing tribute to the great poet of his country, and represents the Spirit of the Bard meeting at midnight with the Spirits of the Martyrs on the Mount of Communion, and holding a sublime colloquy. Aird was a member of the Burns Club, which has been long established in Dumfries. He presided at the annual dinner of the society on the 25th January 1840; and he was in the habit for many years of

joining his fellow-citizens at their pleasant anniversaries. The centenary of the poet's birth in 1859 was celebrated, however, with an enthusiasm which far surpassed any previous demonstration, and which is unparalleled perhaps in the annals of hero-worship. No fewer than 872 meetings were held all the world over, thus verifying remarkably the prophetic words of Burns in his lifetime, that he would be more thought of a hundred years hence than he was then. A ringing cheer arose that night in Scotland and the British Isles. It was caught up by our kinsmen in the great continent of America; it was passed on to our countrymen in Australia and the distant East; and the shout of jubilee resounded in all quarters of the globe. It seems as if men, and particularly Scotchmen, had been touched by electricity; for they banded together like brothers on that occasion, and, for the sake of dear Auld Lang Syne, they sang, with one voice and with one heart, the immortal songs of the Scottish ploughman:—

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.”

Dumfries, as the guardian of the poet's sepulchre,

was called upon, *par excellence*, to take a prominent part in the rejoicings of the day. Upwards of a thousand persons, chiefly working men, assembled to do honour to a Scotchman who belonged to their own ranks. Another festive meeting of the citizens was also held, under the presidency of Dr W. A. F. Browne, one of H.M. Commissioners in Lunacy. Colonel William Burns, the eldest surviving son of the poet, was present ; and Aird, who spoke from the croupier's chair, made a memorable appearance on the occasion, displaying an eloquence which might have given him a distinguished position in the Church :—

“He proposed ‘The Fine Arts.’ They were now, he said, met to pay a special tribute to poetry, and he was sure they would extend their loyal good wishes to the whole of the charming sisterhood. Each of them had their own distinctive features, but Beauty based upon Utility was the common soul of all of them. And if any man loved poetry, he was compelled, by the constitution of his nature, more or less to love all the arts. By the consent of critics, he might say of mankind, poetry had been placed foremost of the band. The reason was obvious. From the flexibility and infinite variety of her medium of words, Poetry could embody in a moment the subtlest and most complex emotions of the human mind, and could express flux and reflux, transition and progress.” After an illustration of this, drawn from one of the ancient poets, Mr Aird apologised for travelling out of Kyle on such a night. “Very well. Burns in his ‘Twa Dogs,’ alluding to the fashionable follies of the young buck of his day, says—

' Or by Madrid he takes the route,
To thrum guitars, and fecht wi' nowte.'

Let them mark the power of the word 'nowte.' Had the poet said that our young fellow went to Spain to fight with bulls, there would have been some dignity in the thing; but think of him going all that way to 'fecht wi' nowte!' It was felt at once to be ridiculous. Such was the power of the single word 'nowte,' as chosen by Burns. It conveyed at once a statement of the folly and a sarcastic rebuke of the folly. Such were those single decisive strokes, as from a sledge-hammer, which sent the Burns' broad-arrow deep and for ever into the very heart of the matter. Such a feat as the word 'nowte' had thus achieved was beyond the reach of any other of the Fine Arts."

In 1863 Aird retired from the editorship of the 'Herald,' after a service of twenty-eight years. He was entertained at a public dinner on the occasion, and presented with a handsome testimonial. Mr J. Macalpine Leny, convener of the county, occupied the chair, and was supported by Mr James Gordon, Provost of the burgh, Sheriff Trotter, and a large assemblage of gentlemen, who united, irrespective of politics, to do honour to one of whom all parties were proud. Aird accepted the compliment with modest pride, and remarked, in the course of an effective speech—

"Mr Leny, you said to me a month ago—'Aird, you are not faithful to our great Conservative oracle, Lord Eldon, "Never resign!" was his maxim.' Well, if I

were a judge, I should never resign; if I were a physician, I should never resign; if I were a minister of the Gospel, I should never resign. And fifty other spheres of active duty there are which can be not only well served, but best served, by the ripeness of years and judgment. But, gentlemen, the Press is scarcely one of these. I may say decisively, it is not one of these. It demands ceaseless vigilance, ceaseless enterprise, ceaseless animation, and this in many cases by night as well as by day. The demand is all the more exacting in these our times of restless competition, and when the very lightning of heaven, which we have caught and yoked in harness, comes floating in its telegrams the whole night long, up to the very hour of morning publication. Under such a system there are no holidays, properly so called, for an editor. He cannot be away from his post: he cannot even afford to be unwell. When I tell you, for myself, I have been on the 'Herald' for twenty-eight years, and during all that time, through good health and bad health, have written more or less in every newspaper, and have borne alone the necessary anxiety of every recurring week, you will scarcely wonder that I am now needing my day of rest, and I beg it respectfully from you."

A great banquet, attended by two hundred gentlemen, was held at Dumfries on the 9th August 1871, in commemoration of the centenary of Sir Walter Scott. In the absence of the Lord Advocate of Scotland, afterwards Lord Young, who was detained in London by parliamentary duty, Aird was unanimously called upon to preside. The position was quite a

novel one for him to occupy, but he spoke with an oratorical ability which took all by surprise, and called forth the acclamations of an enthusiastic meeting. In proposing the immortal memory of Scott (whom he had often seen in his youth both at Melrose and Edinburgh), he said :—

“Gentlemen,—I propose it with an affectionate reverence, due less to the great literary author than to the great and good man. It was fortunate for the full development, alike of Scott's personal character and his literary genius, that his youth was nurtured, half amidst the picturesque forms of the old Border feudalism, in the tender twilight of its passing away; and half in the civic amenities and practical life of the new order of things. A certain romantic play of thought and feeling, ever contrasting yet ever blending, never failing to harmonise the elements of the old and the new, was one of his main distinctions accordingly, and his most peculiar charm as a man and a writer. To all his neighbours in country and town, Scott, at once so chivalrous and so homely simple, was a pride and a joy. Serenely elevated above the petty intrigues, envy, and jealousy of authorship, throughout the Guild of Letters he was loved as a brother—a brother ever ready to help where and when he could. No sounder, healthier, clearer spirit was ever given to be a model to men.

“It is mainly as a Poet and Novelist, that Scott is such a power in the world. The larger poems, which may be called Romantic Epics, sprang by natural and easy evolution from that spirit of ballad minstrelsy within him to which his youth was attuned. The wild sweet freshness of ‘The Lay of the Last Minstrel’ still keeps it the

prime favourite with not a few. 'Marmion' has more varied and imposing characters, more breadth and depth of action, more startling contrasts of shade and light. It is Scott's most powerful poem. The battle of Flodden in it is a piece of strenuous animation without a pause, hardly equalled by Homer himself. 'The Lady of the Lake,' with its lovely scenery, its romantic characters and story, and its pleasing symmetry of effect, is the most captivating to the general heart, especially of the young. 'The Lord of the Isles' and 'Rokeby' have splendid passages; but on the whole they are decidedly inferior to their predecessors. Many, too many of the so-called poets of our day, are analysts rather than poets. They give us morbid subjective introspection, instead of the clear, open face of self-illustrating, self-showing nature. It is as if a painter, in presenting the 'human face divine,' were to exhibit all the facial ramifications of nerves and of muscles. Pray, good friend, draw the epidermis over your tissues; loyal to peerless 'Ellen of the Lake,' let us have the grace and bloom of that bewitching cheek. Scott's poetry may be sneered at now and then by the disciples of the Self-conscious school; but it is a pictorial embodiment of thought and feeling, which is far better than a description and discussion of them; it is natural, healthy, and refreshing as sunshine, dew, and air, and will never go out of fashion.

"How shall we characterise the Waverley Novels? They are a world in themselves: a world of individual and social character and life, in their infinite interpenetrating varieties of war and peace, business and sport, tragic passion and comic mirth. No such one body of imaginative literature of this order has ever been given to the world. The Scottish series, drawn very much from our author's own sympathetic knowledge and ex-

perience, have the highest value; but the splendours of such tales as 'Ivanhoe,' 'Kenilworth,' 'Quentin Durward,' 'The Talisman,' are without a parallel in their own sphere. Such are these wonderful books. Untainted by the slightest blot of moral impurity—full of the treasures of wisdom—wisdom made captivating by all the graces of fancy and imagination, how many millions of human spirits have they cheered and elevated! Strike the Waverley Novels from the world, and what a dreary blank to the heart of humanity! Apart from their endless other merits, were I simply to name to you all Scott's distinct creations of character in his poetry and novels, what a bead-roll of wonders they would be! Would, rather, I were a magician for an hour, to make them file over before you in faithful embodiment! What a procession! What a multiform, picturesque procession! Yes: in creative genius, Scott, is almost the very foremost of men. If second, second only to Shakespeare.

"I have touched on Sir Walter Scott's generosity as a man. It ran into excess. This was the one flaw in the sound constitutional economy of his character and life. It ran into excess in his baronial hospitalities: it ran into excess in his over-confidence in others: it ran into excess in his gentle incapacity (how gentle!) of deserting ineffective old friends whom he had linked to himself in his plans. The error and the ruin were great. Great though they were, the world can hardly afford to lament them; for they brought before us one of the most august figures on the stage of time, our shattered Titan, sitting solitary in the twilight of his fortunes—shattered; ay, but sublimely invincible in his toil of reparation. Labour after labour, greater than the labours of Hercules, did he fling into his scale of that ill-adjusted balance; yea, and

in the prodigality of his self-sacrifice, he flung into it his own magnanimous life, till he more than pressed down the scale to the most sensitive level of honesty and honour. Here is a lesson of moral manhood, for the generations and the ages yet unborn, great in value beyond all his writings.

‘ The glory dies not, and the grief is past. ’ ”

Aird next proposed the immortal memory of Burns, and said :—

“ Gentlemen,—We are here this evening to do special honour to our Walter Scott. It is a double distinction to us that we meet on the very spot which holds the dust of our Robert Burns, the greatest lyric poet of any age or country. It is pleasant for me to remember, and to remind you, that Burns and Scott once met. Would I were a painter, to try my hand at the scene ! What a capital picture it would make ! The place of meeting, as you all know, was the breakfast-room of Dr Adam Ferguson, the historian and philosopher. Professor Dugald Stewart, another celebrity in moral science, was also present. Fine accessories you be, Sages of the Chair ! Ay, smile complacently as you may in your self-conscious superiority, accessories you are, and nothing more. The two central figures in the picture are the fair-haired boy Walter, and that wonderful young Ploughman to whose compliment he is blushing. No disparagement to our two philosophic fathers. They did well in their function. But how limited their function, compared with the world-wide instruction and delight about to issue from those two young hearts and heads before them ! Gentlemen, let us now call to mind how long the literary genius of the country was kept in thrall by

the neat antithetic clink-clink of the Pope couplet. It really seemed for a while, as if poetry could never again be cast in any other form. In came our century; forth burst poetry in a storm of revolution. The more we value the power, freedom, and variety of the new order of things; the more let Burns have his first great distinction. He was one of the master-forces to break up that artificial monotonous sing-song tyranny. Intellect direct and masculine; vivid imagination; wit, humour, tenderness, all fused into one in the passionate wells of fire, were the molten outburst of our new Son of Song—new and unexpected. And here let me say, once for all, of Burns, in the way of blame and apology,—the volcanic eruption was at times a devouring fire, to which consideration and conviction are stubble and tow. Vehement impulsive power is certainly the man's grand characteristic. . . . All is pungent pith. Not a verse, not a clause of a verse, but tingles with life to the last tip of articulation.

“These be the anxious days of war and defence; stand forward, Blue Bonnet :—

‘The kettle o’ the Kirk and State,
Perhaps a clout may fail in’t;
But deil a foreign tinkler loon
Shall ever ca’ a nail in’t.
Our fathers’ bluid the kettle bought;
And wha wad dare to spoil it,
By Heaven! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it.’

“A patriotic burst of graphic humour worth a troop of horse! . . . Lord Ravensworth, who has translated some of Horace's odes wonderfully well, tells us that he has been twenty years trying every conceivable variety of form in which to render the lines—

‘Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem :’

Two lines musical of the very soul of love, and certainly all but untranslatable. If we cannot translate them, we can more than match their loveliness from our Scottish Ploughman :—

‘Sae flaxen were her ringlets ;
Her eyebrows of a darker hue
Bewitchingly o’erarching
Twa laughing een o’ bonnie blue.’

What troubadour, dedicated to Beauty and Love, has warbled us out such a charm as—

‘Bewitchingly o’erarching
Twa laughing een o’ bonnie blue’?

‘Dulce ridentem’ is very sweet ; yet how general and vague, compared with the exquisite picturesque speciality of life in—

‘Twa laughing een o’ bonnie blue’!

Gentlemen, the main service done by Burns to the world lives, and lives for ever, in his Songs. The service is great, without a parallel in the uninspired literature of mankind. Those old Scottish melodies of ours, sweet though they were, strong and sweet, were all the more, by their very strength and sweetness, a moral plague, from the indecent songs that had long been set to them. How was the plague to be stayed? All the preachers in the land could not divorce the grossness from its pride of place in the music. The only way was to put something better in its stead. This inestimable ‘something better,’ not to be bought by Californian mines, was given us by Burns. Down slunk the foul rhymes to the moles and to the bats. A social reform, beyond the power of

Pulpit or Parliament, was accomplished at once. Think of more than three hundred healthy Songs, ranging along the whole gamut of the human bosom, supplied by one man—a man who died in his thirty-eighth year! A short gush from the heart to the heart,—such is the vital nature of these Songs—such the secret of their everlasting, ever-widening popularity. In the Far West, the settlers, we are told,

‘ Read, by turns,
The Psalms of David and the Songs of Burns.’

Ay, and on to the end of time will these Songs, singing themselves to our old Scottish music, be light and gladness, and spiritual health to the dwellers of every clime, millions of millions, kindred of our ancient blood and tongue.”

Owing to his simple tastes and frugal habits, Aird had acquired a comfortable independence, and his last years were passed in much peace and quietness. He was never married, and his wants were unostentatious and few. An aristocrat in theory, he was a democrat in practice, and pursued without ambition his own path. His books, or rather his thoughts, were his companions, for his library was not an extensive one. He resembled the great poet of the English Lakes in various respects—in his pure and consecrated life, his musings among the woods and streams, his modest and retiring ways. Every nest in spring was known to him, and every flower which summer brings. The beautiful meadow of the Dock,

on the banks of the winding Nith, was his favourite haunt, and here he used to watch the autumn sun as he sank in crimson clouds behind the hills of Galloway, and flushed the river with his dying glory. The numerous visitors who came from far and near were also dear to him; for though his head was getting grey, his heart remained youthful to the last. His conversational powers were of a high order; and unlike such brilliant talkers as Macaulay and Sydney Smith, he did not require the excitement of a mixed company or of the dinner-table, to call them into exercise. A walk in the country was sufficient to set thoughts and words aflow; and it was delightful to be his companion in the fields, while he pointed out the beauties of earth and sky, or told some story of the demigods of literature in his young days. Aird was particularly fond of his birds, and used to speak of the starlings and mavis as if they had been distinguished personages arriving or departing. Robin fed from his hand, and his pet chaffinch "Tibbie" took crumbs of bread from his mouth. When asked for the secret of his taming powers over birds, he replied, "A pure conscience and a steady eye are the only lures; they will know at once if you mean to harm, and disguises are useless." The spotted flycatcher was one of his tender anxieties, for he was in the habit of defending her low-built nest from cats, by placing thorn and holly branches round the root of the tree. Then

in autumn he would watch with interest the young swallows as they wheeled about overhead, till he was satisfied that they were fit for their long flight to winter quarters in Africa. It is thus he sings of the Swallow in one of his loveliest poems :—

“The little comer’s coming, the comer o’er the sea,
The comer of the summer, all the sunny days to be.
How pleasant through the pleasant sleep thy early twitter
heard,
O swallow by the lattice! Glad days be thy reward!

The silent Power that brings thee back with leading-strings
of love
To haunts where first the summer sun fell on thee from above,
Shall bind thee more to come aye to the music of our leaves,
For here thy young, where thou hast sprung, shall glad thee
in our eaves.”

Aird wrote to Mrs Smith of Whitehaven :—

“*20th June 1864.*

“Tibbie and Chirsty (as we have named our two hen shilfas) are well, and so are Robin and our other little friends. Tibbie takes crumbs from the hand now. One day as I was musing on the gate up the road, she sat down on it close beside me, and let me touch her with my finger. Another day she followed me as far as the lodge, when I advised her to go home and not make a fool of herself and me in the Dumfries market. Tell all this to Tottie and Tom,—it is meant for them.”

“*3d November 1864.*

“I trust Tom is finding his tongue, and conquering on from word to word. Tell him to throw the crumbs care-

lessly to Bobby at first, and keep well back till little Red-waistcoat gets faith in him. Dr Brown, author of 'Rab and his Friends,' was visiting me lately. He was charmed with Robin feeding on my hand, but Tibbie was not at home. Under the high pressure of the general gregarious instinct overriding the special familiarity, she has been much away in the fields of late with the flocks of finches. On Sunday last, when I was at the head of our little field by the gate, she detached herself from a flock on a high tree, and came and sat down quite beside me. I almost touched her with my hand as I held crumbs to her, but she did not care for them even when I laid them down. Her object was pure friendly recognition. Dear wee Tibbie! Since her ancestress came out of Noah's Ark, there has been no such shilfa, nor will there ever be such another, at least till the Millennium."

Dr Brown thus refers in congenial and loving terms to Tibbie and her winning ways :—

" 23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,
19th April 1866.

"MY DEAR MR AIRD,—Many thanks for your 'Notes,' especially for dear little Tibbie, of whom I have often thought; it is delightfully because simply told. Are you never in Edinburgh? Be sure to find me out, if you are. I am always at home from 1 to 2.30.

"Thomas the True came off most victoriously.*

* Mr Carlyle in his Rectorial Address before the University of Edinburgh.

It was a wonderful homage to genius and worth and nature, to witness the nine-tenths of his immense company (not audience) sitting patiently and more, without getting one word, for an hour and a half.—

Yours ever truly,

J. BROWN.

“*P.S.*—I have sent Tibbie to the ‘Scotsman.’”

The “Notes” referred to by Dr Brown were contributed by Aird in 1864 to the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, and appeared in the form of a charming paper upon Birds. They were afterwards printed among the Transactions of the Society ; and the following extract will be read with pleasure for the sake of gentle “Tibbie,” the poet’s darling friend :—

“*THE CHAFFINCH.*—It is my first business, when I step out in the morning, to call on Robin ; and he comes and sits on my hand, and eats his breakfast of oaten cake broken into crumbs. With all his habits of familiarity, it is not easy to get Robin to do this. We have also with us at Mountain Hall a hen chaffinch or shilfa, whose tameness is even more peculiar than Bob’s. She was bred close beside the house in 1863. All last winter, and especially in spring, when the natural food of birds gets scanty, she was very much about the door, and ventured often into the lobby. She was gradually brought to take food from the hand ; and when she was hatching, and came down to me from her nest, eager for supplies, I put the bit of cake in my mouth, and she flew straight to my face

and took it. When her young were out, she took none of the cake to them in the nest, but fed them with the small green caterpillars from the leaves. When the fledgelings had got to the garden, however, she followed me assiduously for the cake, hovering about my face till I got it into my mouth, and then made off with it to her young ones. I may remark here that oaten bread is preferred by the birds to every other kind : there is much flint in the oat for the bones, and the instinct of birds may like it accordingly. When her brood was dismissed to take charge of themselves, Tibbie (for such is the name we have given our little friend) continued to be very familiar with the people of the house ; and often, when I was leaning on the gate, the breadth of a field away from our avenue, she came and sat down on the gate beside me. Once, but only once, she allowed me to touch her with my forefinger. After a proper interval, she dressed up her old nest (not a very common thing), and brought out a second brood in it. About the middle of July, Tibbie began to be much away from us, yet visiting us from time to time. For the cake she seemed no longer to care : I suppose she was getting food in the fields which she liked better. I have seen the flock of chaffinches repeatedly in our upper grounds ; and have noticed, in accordance with White of Selborne's observation, that the most of them are hens. One day lately, when I was by a bit of paling up in one of the fields, I saw Tibbie detach herself from a flock of finches on a high tree ; and down she sat on the paling close beside me. I offered her some small crumbs, but she declined them : her object was pure friendly recognition. After she had sat awhile, and I had bantered her for her faithlessness to the kind old door, she answered with a chirrup, and rejoined the sisterhood on the tree."

Such was the life of the Old Bachelor and his birds
at sweet Mountain Hall :—

“Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding guest !
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God that loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

In summer-time Aird would visit his brother, Mr James Aird, in Dundee, or his sisters, Mrs Paisley and Mrs Smith, who lived near his old home in Tweed-side, the visits becoming rarer as the years passed on. The pious son was an affectionate brother and a generous uncle, for the ties of kindred were sacred in his eyes, and wound themselves like tendrils round his heart. The death, in 1837, of his brother Adam, a most lovable man, was a great grief to him, as to all the family.

While his niece was dying at Bowden, he thus writes to her sister :—

“DUMFRIES, 22d October 1854.

“I have received all your letters duly, and also letters direct from Galashiels. Like yourself, I am unable to be at Bowden. My old enemy has me so severely by the neck and shoulders just

now, and my heart is so affected, and I am so morbidly sensitive about cold, that the doctor has advised me strongly not to venture. The dear lamb will accept William's visit as one from yourself; and I am sure she will not doubt my affection for her. I wrote to her yesterday, and also to my father, begging him just to engage some quiet woman to sleep with Isa and help her during the night, in order to save Grannie, till your mother got forward. If your mother and Grannie be with her at last, it is enough. Many of us would only disturb and distract her in her last moments. It is sad to lose one so endeared to us all; and infinitely affecting when we think of her as the bit ewe-lamb that has lain so long in Grannie's bosom. But oh, to herself it will be a blessed release from a life of suffering! For our gracious Lord will make her glad according to the years wherein she has seen sorrow."

Aird was a good master, too—most considerate and kind—as the following beautiful letter, written in his old age, will show :—

" 30th July 1873.

"MY DEAR SARAH,—That very day on which Cousin Robert died, I found my faithful friend and servant Mary lying in her night-clothes, early in the morning, dead on her bedroom floor. Heart-disease is pronounced to have been the cause of death. From what her eldest sister tells me, Mary seems to have had a presentiment

of it. I found her lying stretched out on her left side. Before her on the floor was a breakfast-cup, with a little water in the bottom. The body was stiff and cold. I noticed, however, that she had been in bed. My notion is, that finding the mortal ail upon her, she had risen and made her way to the spigot for a drink, and returning to her room, had sunk on the floor unable to get into bed. Even in the pangs of dissolution, the poor thing, in the strength of that something heavenly within us stronger than death or the grave, had bethought her of womanly delicacy and the duty of giving as gentle a shock as possible to the afflicted friend, who was to be the first to find her in the morning. And so she had stretched out her limbs, laid one ankle over the other, drawn her night-dress carefully down over her knees, and gathered it over her breast, holding it with her left hand close under her chin. On Friday I gave her worthy burial, and laid her head in the grave beside her father and mother in Terregles churchyard. My poor Mary! Her affectionate loyalty to me was a thing not to be got with money. I have no hope of falling in with it again in this mortal life. I have much to tell you about her afterwards. In the meantime, I may just mention to you that her tremendous fall backward on a stone pavement from a window two storeys up, gave a shock to her nervous system from which she never wholly recovered. I have learned since her death that she was a raving maniac for half a year under Dr Browne's charge. I wish I had known all this before. Tenderly though I have invariably treated her, my reverence for her innocent sufferings would have made my care of her all the more tender."

Aird lived and died in communion with the Church

of Scotland, and between him and his venerable clergyman, the late Rev. Dr Wallace* of St Michael's, there existed the warmest affection and regard. He was a daily reader of the Bible, and observed devoutly the practice of family prayer. Though indifferent to questions of ecclesiastical government and ceremonial, he was a firm believer in those great verities embodied in the Apostles' Creed, which constitute the Christian faith, and underlie all forms of it, Catholic and Protestant. Of the heathen world he ever spoke with charity and compassion, esteeming the sincere idolater who worshipped the Most High under imperfect symbols, and walked up to the light which he possessed. Sunday was to Aird a day of gladness, and he used to quote with pleasure the saying of the old bishop, that our heavenly Father loves to see His children in the playground as well as in the school. His views of life were hopeful, and far removed from ascetic gloom or fanatic zeal. He was a lover of the drama, and of all that is beautiful in art, regarding these as the handmaids of nature and religion, and the good gifts of God. His piety altogether was of a mild and cheerful character, but modest and reserved ; and, like the best of men, he did not care to speak much to others of his spiritual experiences. Nor was it necessary.

* Dr Wallace, who died at Dumfries, 20th November 1864, was also the clergyman of Mrs Burns, the widow of the poet.

He was well known to all with whom he came in contact, by the quiet dignity of his daily walk ; and his sun went down without the shadow of a cloud to dim the remembrance of its noontide lustre.

The end came in 1876. In February of that year, the public journals announced with concern the serious illness of Thomas Aird. The complaint, which was of a dropsical nature, was attended with distressing breathlessness, and for several weeks he was obliged to remain night and day in his arm-chair. He was much exhausted at this time from the want of sleep ; but a merciful lull took place in his sufferings, during which he was able to converse with his faithful medical attendant, Dr Borthwick, and the loving relatives around him. In conversation he turned wistfully to the scenes and memories of his boyhood, and spoke much to his sisters of Melrose and the Tweed—"the ever-dear Tweed" (as he once wrote), "whose waters flow continually through my heart, and make me often *greet* in my lonely evenings." One warm sunny day in April he sat for a little while at the door in his garden-chair, enjoying once more the sweetness of the spring and the sight of his young plants in the rockery. It was a delightful hour to him, though mingled with solemn thoughts. The Nith was flowing at his feet, and as "he looked down upon the shining river—that symbol of human life—

and turned his eyes towards the old-fashioned church and churchyard of Troqueer, on the other bank of the stream, he was reminded that there was only such a gap between life and death.”*

Though so much better for the time being, Aird never shared in the hopes of recovery which were expressed by some of his friends. From the beginning of his illness he knew that the hand of death was upon him, but his mind was composed to the last, and his faith was clear. He felt grateful for the kind visits of his clergyman, Mr Paton, who spoke one day with diffidence of his ability to comfort him. “Speak on,” replied the dying man, “and pray for me. I feel just like a little child before my God.”

On Tuesday morning, 25th April, Aird rose and read his usual portions of Scripture. His niece, Mrs Smith, and Miss Thorburn, a dear and intimate acquaintance, were sitting beside him, and he conversed with interest upon various subjects. One of the ladies read aloud an article of Mr Gilfillan’s, and had just finished, when the final change came on with startling suddenness. He lay breathing quietly and easily for about an hour, perfectly conscious, and engaged in silent prayer. “I am quite comfortable, quite comfortable,” he said to the fond inquiries that were made from time to time. The expression of his face was

* ‘Scotsman,’ April 27, 1876.

rapt and beautiful. Gradually his breathing grew weaker, and without a sigh he expired in the arms of his devoted friends.

The intelligence was received with a feeling of profound sorrow throughout the whole of Scotland. The community of Dumfries sincerely mourned the loss of its most conspicuous citizen, and, at the request of the inhabitants, the funeral was a public one. The interment took place on the 1st of May, in St Michael's churchyard, the burial service being performed at the house of the deceased and at the grave. Mr James Aird of Dundee, and other relatives and friends, were the pall-bearers; and as the procession moved onward to the cemetery, it was attended by crowds of sorrowing spectators who lined the streets. The day was the first of summer, and the bright sunshine which filled the sky seemed to celebrate the close of a beautiful life. The remains of the poet were laid amid the scenes he loved, not far from the grave which holds the sacred ashes of Burns, and from the venerable church of St Michael, in which for forty years he was a reverent worshipper.

Thomas Aird died in the seventy-fourth year of his age, leaving behind him an honourable name in the literature of Scotland. Wilson, Hogg, Lockhart, De Quincey, Moir, Cunningham, Pollok, Motherwell, were among the friends and contemporaries

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of his youth, and with him has passed away almost the last representative of a brilliant race. Of the comrades of earlier days, the illustrious Carlyle alone survives :

“ But ’tis an old belief,
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of Grief,
Dear friends shall meet once more ;

Beyond the sphere of Time,
And Sin, and Fate’s control :
Serene in endless prime
Of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I’ll not forego—
Eternal be the sleep
Unless to waken so.” *

* John Gibson Lockhart.

J. W.

MANSE OF TRAQUAIR,

March 1878.

POEMS.

TO A YOUNG POET.

IN reverence an eternal boy,
Hope sustain thee, love, and joy ;
Duty, large of work and plan,
Crown thee a consummate man !
Soft and slow, soft and slow,
Ages come, and ages go.
Dark curdlings ! Crash ! Convulsive climb
Earth's Periods up to Eden's prime.
Mark and tell the Type that springs
Persistent through the wreck of things,—
The Type of Form, to Reason's eye
Test of Design in unity.
The Boundless One, not to be missed
Of man, became a mannerist.

Deserts of fear ; the hills of wonder,
Peaks of snow, and scalps of thunder ;
The murk air strung with slanting rain,
The creatures huddled on the plain ;
And oh the smile that Summer smiles
On dimpling seas and sunny isles ;

And Beauty, in the dewy dells,
Moulding of light her flowery bells;
Songs of wheat, and purple glee,—
The Seasons minister to thee !
Night serve thee with her mystic gleams,
Sleep, and the swooning world of dreams !

Powers of darkness, powers of day,
All in this bit of kneaded clay !
Heart of man, O heart of man,
Centre of the sovereign plan,
Infinite of joy and wo,
Thee must the Bard profoundly know ;—
Thee in life ; and thee in death,
When sighs to Heaven the saintly breath,
And ghosts unlaïd, to haggard crime,
Start on the Hell-ward edge of time.

Poet, be this thy widening theme,—
Patriarch order ; civic scheme ;
Right ; Custom the great magistrate ;
Art, patient keen ; Learning sedate ;
Work, on his brows the burning sleet,
But Plenty's Horn poured at his feet ;
Thrift, with her fringe of gladsome beauty
To the sober robe of duty ;
Social loves, and corporate hates ;
The curse of war ; the curse of States
Unschool'd, unknowing—beasts are they
Of burden, where not beasts of prey ;
And, growing still in moral worth,
The lords of knowledge lords of earth ;
He chief who makes, creative sage,
His day a great ancestral age,
O'er loins of kings, and ancient seeds,
The world-throned heir of his own deeds.

Far-visioned in ecstatic wonder,
Sweep the worlds above and under ;
Zion so glad and beautiful,
And Tophet's fierce emblazoned pool.
Burst in larger song sublime,
Persuasive to the end of time.

Plant of Renown, of bleeding leaf,
Blossoming in the House of Grief,
Be thou our Poet's crown of bay,
And keep from him all death away !

SONGS OF THE SEASONS.

SONG THE FIRST.

HEARTS fail when Winter roars
On the blown seas.

Red blood for pale ! Spring pours
Green gladness through her luminous trees.

The bee has wet his happy horn.
Cloudlet of the silver edges,
Past thee, up, the lark he twinkles ;
How he sings, as up he twinkles !
Through the sedges,
O'er the ledges,
Bubbling, how the runnel tinkles ;
Down away the runnel tinkles !
Music of the Summer morn.

Joy from grange to city run !
Lo ! Autumn forges in the sun
Her spears, so rough of golden head,
To pierce the hungry soul with bread.

SONG THE SECOND.

Blue breathing Night, down from her styptick noon,
Makes her young ice ; the pools all plated gleam.
Bold speed defies her : down the dashing stream
Flashes the shattered moon.

Cunning pipe of liquid sweetness !
Who is blowing ? Spring is blowing.
All the sullen gloom is going ;
All the days are happy fleetness.

Mottled globe of seedy wool,
Blow it round, and blow it full,—
Blow the dandelion right !
Puck, merry elf, behind it notes
His fay of love come on apace ;
He puffs the downy bubble in her face,
To vex her with the wingèd notes :
All by the charmèd moon, all in the fairy night.

Morn on the moors ! she dips her foot divine
In purple blooms and webs of beaded dew.
How meek she combs, in ripples thin and fine,
Her hair of cloud high out upon the blue !

SONG THE THIRD.

Storm in his blackness forth
Hangs on the suffering north.
Wide go his wings, away he springs,
Far back the tumult of his hair he flings,
The winds are in his roaring wings.

Tearing through forests, making gulfs of night,
Rushes the tyrannous Might.

The secret of the April bud
Bursts to the dewy liquor sweet.
Old men come forth to warm their blood,
And chirp upon the sunny seat.

Black shadows sail. Lights flash in turn :
What lustre on yon showery sea !
On every leaf of every tree
Drops of molten glory burn.

The Autumn eve, so warm and golden,
Lies on the hamlet quaint and olden,
Quaint and quiet. Crofts of wheat
Strength and Youth are yonder reaping ;
Age at her door, babes at her feet,
Half is spinning, half is sleeping.

SONG THE FOURTH.

Drear, at the droop of day,
The nettle-wands, all wintry bare,
Sigh in our kirkyard old and lone !
That bowing stranger gray,
What seeks he there?
Sunk in the nettles, moss-o'ergrown,
He finds a flat memorial stone.
Kneeling, he picks the frozen moss away ;
There be the lettered names :
"My father !" he exclaims ;
"Mother, O mother !" Many a tear
Is dropping on the names so dear.

Floods of the thaws of night !
Yon hills, how blear, in raw dun vapour stand.
Ribbs of old snow, glazed bluely white,
Indent the sodden land.

Look up ! those leafy openings through,
What liquid gulfs of living blue !
"Look up, O sunken face,"
Quoth June in her sweet grace,
"Drink my blue day and live, my day so balmy blue !"

Yon pine with blasted head
Stands, raven-topped, nailed on the moon so red,—
Hung on the southern heath, so large and round and red.
There graves of suicides be.
Hags, posters of the midnight air,
At witching-time hold synod there.
But see ! oh see
The troubled ground, the ghosts uprising through
In hoary, bloodless, thin-compounded dew,
With struggling spots : their shivering lips emit
A feeble whistling as around they flit.
Bending, the bird of ordinance
Croaks music to the mingled dance.
Such tales of thee, weird fell,
Old knitters tell.

SONG THE FIFTH.

Day far into the west is gone :
Weary the Beggar wanders on,—
On where the infant river gushes
The dreary fruitless moorlands through,

And o'er the necks o' the sighing rushes
Will-o'-the-Wisp goes dancing blue.

Cloud on the hill,
It comes down by the mill :
The wheel, it is going ;
The meal, it is snowing ;
And the miller, good soul,
Gives the Beggar his dole.

The moorland cloud is black with thunder,
Old Bluegown's badge is gleaming under.
With tentative staff, high stepping slow,
Blind, face up, dog-led, see him go.
Thunder-gloom, to him there's none ;
Down he sits and picks his bone.

Doggie, he
(Head awry !
Watchful eye !

Muzzle lent on Master's knee,
Sharpening, twitching, farther leant !)
Knows for whom that bone is meant.

Hearts are large when Harvest comes :
Blithe the mealy Beggar hums.

SONG THE SIXTH.

Look up ! Yon field of blue
Broadcast with worlds is sown.
Use within use ! Look up, O Man, and own
Vast worlds are also light and spiritual thought for you.

"Sunny shower ! sunny shower !

'Twill not last half an hour !"

Clapping hands, Kitty forth, with her merry merry cry,
Crows the vaward of the year : and her sweet blue eye
Glimmers up, shimmers up to the sheen of the sky.

Hush ! from yon gulf of leaves the brooding dove
Breathes the soft crushings of her heart of love.

O the sweet dove of love !

The blinding day glares on the granite hill.

The very grasshopper is still.

Through yon white stones the sportsman slow

Crosses the gully waterless ;

Panting his dogs behind him go,

With lolling tongues in dry distress.

SONG THE SEVENTH.

Yon Alp, he lifts his snowy horn

To catch the virgin rose of morn.

Clouds in towering tumult loom :

Sunny onsets dash the gloom ;

Bold burly March, he laughs to do it ;

Yon showery drift, he whistles through it ;

Breaks in wild glee the Rainbow's horns ;

Hangs drops of glory on the points of thorns ;

But, o'er yon sower on the slope,

Breathes blessing through his thin white dust of hope.

Breezy dapplings to and fro,

What a ferment o'er the meadow !

O'er the billowy corn they go,
Light and shadow, light and shadow.

Bearded leas embattled stand,
Embattled with the hosts of bread.
Famine has seen and fled.
The sower's hand,
It saves the land :
High honour to the sower's hand !

SONG THE EIGHTH.

Cape on the waves ! In sucking caves
The seething pots of ocean boil :
Good ship and true, they suck not you,
Home plunging in your honest toil.

Up in yon sweet blue fluency of air,
Our mountain trees, greening of dewy light,
Stand in their prosperous height :
Finch, merle, and throstle pipe their morning quarrel
there.

Summer secrets here they be
Tangled deepest : Shy of view,
The woodman lorn holds, beast and bird, with you
The wild unwritten by-law, large and lax,—
Guild of the forest free.
Down in the sounding wood there goes his vehement axe.

Home, red with earth, the weary hind
Plods through the thistly stubbles wide.
Shrill birds hang wavering down the wind.
The miry hunters homeward ride.

SONG THE NINTH.

Babes to their rest !
Friends by the fire in ring and row ;—
 Quiet eyes to quiet eyes,
The saucy toss, the gay surprise,
 Lips of sages dropping slow
 Oil of ages—love and law,
 Quips at the solemn saw ;
Mild general joy, and quick peculiar zest !

Starts, if the leaves but shiver,
The leveret all a-quiver :
Upraised, it snuffs ; with mobile ears it listens
Before, behind ; its eyeballs, liquid large,
 Turn to each leaf that glistens.
See-ho ! from out the stirring shade
Wildered it springs—it stops—it scuds across the glade.
Wild pet ! be safe in Freedom's charge.

Moon of the May ! spell of the listening grove !
 Glancing eyes, and whispered love !
Lady Well, the twain by thee
Sit ; deep and pure, their emblem be :
And aye, like the sweet secret of the night,
 The living water dimples into light.

Above the mist, the sun has kissed
Our Eildons, one yet three :
The triplet smiles, like glittering isles
Set in a silver sea.
Break, glades of morn ; burst, hound and horn ;
 Oh then their woods for me !

SONG THE TENTH.

'Tis late and hoar. She's at her door :
Oh for her spouse to come in sight !
No form appears ; she harks, but hears
No foot abroad in all the night.
Start ! her crowding soul is full
Of Murder-Wood and Dead-Man's-Pool,—
Haunts to waylay him : Shuddering in,
To cheat her fear, she hastes to spin.
Sit she cannot : Heart-opprest,
(So thick the ghostly fancies come),
She'll wake her little ones and hear
Their voices in the night so drear ;
Yet pauses, loth to break their rest.
God send the husband and the father home !

Young day, so clear and bland !
Earth in her dew, how fresh and fair !
Far ocean lies
To yonder skies,
A floor of fine-compacted air.
Forth we give thee,
Back receive thee,
Gladness of the sea and land.

Soft smiling through the showers,
He makes the eyes of flowers.
Milk of his blessing, Summer-sweet,
Swells out God's covenant in the heart of wheat.
Deep, he makes the silver vein ;

Deep, he makes the stone of light,—
A heritage from reign to reign,
Of purest sparkle on the functional brow.
Life hangs upon his sight.
O Sun that Adam saw, I see thee now !

Wo for the fallow eves !
The troubled woods roar to the master winds :
Drift of the leaves, it blinds
The wildered day forlorn,—drift of the whirling leaves.

SONG THE ELEVENTH.

His wild penumbra dimly seen
Through shattered glooms and scuds of sleety sheen,
Bold from yonder Norland height
Winter blows his windy horn.

Of sunny drops is April born,—
Of sunny tremblings of the drops of light.
Type of the Love Supreme, yon infinite blue
Takes rounded shape from you,
Embracing shape for you,—
From you, O earth, for you.

Scorn not the lowly patient power :
Old Winter's root
Is bud and shoot,
Leaf and flower,
And—lo ! the fruit :
Heaven is the Harvest of our humblest hour.

SONG THE TWELFTH.

“Our rhythmic armies, lifted whole,
Heaved, whelm and awe ;
True to harmonious law,
Peace, thy consummate works spring from the plastic
soul.”

So mused the Sage. Seaward he stood : “How swell
Yon waters measured to the moon’s weird spell !”
He saw the stars : “Yea, order, thrift divine,
By thee yon congruous worlds unwasted wheel and
shine.”

Bold Ben he strikes his spurs into the sea.
Beauty and they
Bending our bay,
Water and light one living crystal be.
Curve me that darling lip : dimpling it swells
To kiss yon lip of shells.

The splendour is setting, the gray coming on ;
But the bird of the woodland dew-sweetens his tone.
O Sun of my youth, in the flame of thy power
The river ran glory, the meadow caught flower :
That Sun in the west ; be the harmony true,
And steal on Regret in the sweetness of dew.

They come, they go ; they round the plan
Of bread with beauty and with types to man,—
The Seasons. Praise, through all our days,
Our weary days of toil and strife,
For bowing Heavens, and sweet relays
Of blessing to the Gates of Life !

THE HOLY COTTAGE.

"COME near, my child !" the dying father said.
 Life's twilight dews lay heavy on his brow.
 How softly o'er him did that daughter bow !
 She wiped those dews away, she raised his drooping head.

He looked upon her with a long long look,
 Thinking of all her winning little ways,
 His only gladness from her infant days,
 Since God from them away the wife and mother took.

Oft to the moorland places he his child
 Led by the hand, or bore upon his back.
 The curlew's nest he showed her in their track,
 And leveret's dewy play upon the whinny wild.

The while he dug, his coat she quaintly dressed
 With flowers, aye peeping forth lest he might see
 The unfinished fancy ; then how pleased when he,
 Much wondering, donned her work, when came his hour
 of rest !

Down sate she by him ; and when hail or rain
 Crossed that high country with its streaming cloud,
 She nestled in his bosom o'er her bowed,
 Till through the whitening rack looked out the sun again.

And when his axe was in the echoing wood,
Down its shy depths, looking behind her oft,
She o'er the rotting ferns and fungi soft
Through boughs and blinding leaves her bursting way
pursued.

The dry twig, matted in the spear-like grass,
Where fresh from morning's womb the orbèd dew
Lies cold at noon, cracked as she stepped light through,
Startling the cushat out close by the startled lass.

Her fluttering heart was ready then for fear :
Through the far peeping glades she thought she saw .
Forms beckoning, luring her ; the while with awe
The air grew dark and dumb, listening for something
drear.

The ferns were stirred, the leaves were shaken, rain
Fell in big drops, and thunder muttered low ;
Back burst the flushed dishevelled girl, and oh
How glad was she to hear her father's axe again !

Blithe, sitting in the winter night, he made
Or mended by the fire his garden gear ;
She with her mates, their faces glancing clear
From shade to ruddy light, quick flitting round him
played.

And aye some sly young thing, in rosy joyance,
Looked up between his knees, where she was hid ;
Humming he worked till she was found, then chid,
But in a way that just lured back the dear annoyance.

Up grew the virgin in her blooming beauty,
Filling her father's ordered house with grace.

And ever o'er the Word she bowed her face,
Binding her days and nights in one continuous duty.

When Sabbath came, she plucked him mint and thyme,
And led him forth, what hour from farms around
By stile, and sunny croft, and meadow ground,
The parti-coloured folk came to the bell's sweet chime.

The simple people, gathered by the sod
Of the new grave, or by the dial-stone,
Made way, and blessed her as she led him on
With short and tottering steps into the House of God.

And holy was their Sabbath afternoon,
The sunlight falling on that father's head
Through their small western casement, as he read
Much to his child of worlds which he must visit soon.

And if, his hand upon the Book still laid,
His spectacles upraised upon his brow,
Frail nature slept in him, soft going now
She screened the sunny pane, those dear old eyes to
shade.

Then sitting in their garden-plot, they saw
With what delicious clearness the far height
Seemed coming near, and slips of falling light
Lay on green moorland spot and soft illumined shaw.

Turned to the sunny hills where he was nursed,
The old man told his child of bloody times,
Marked by the mossy stone of half-sunk rhymes ;
And in those hills he saw her sainted mother first.

" I see thy mother now ! I see her stand
Waiting for me, and smiling holy sweet ;
The robe of white is flowing to her feet ;
And oh our good Lord Christ, He holds her by the hand !

" Farewell, my orphan lamb ! To leave thee thus
Is death to me indeed ! Yet fear not thou !
On the Good Shepherd I do cast thee now :
'Tis but a little while, and thou shalt come to us.

" Oh yes ! no fear ! home to us in the skies
His Everlasting arms will carry thee.
Couldst thou thy mother see, as I do see !
My child !" He said, and died. His daughter closed
his eyes.

FRANK SYLVAN.

FITTE THE FIRST.

SING, woodland Muse, Frank Sylvan, brave old buck !
 In nankeens, he, white stockings, waistcoat white,
 Green coat, and linen of the amplest cut,
 White as the snow, tied by a ribbon black
 Around the swelling apple of his throat,
 While broad of brim a white hat tops the man,
 Forth sallies, white-haired, rosy cock of health,
 To meet old Winter on the morning hill.
 Hail, let it drive, he cares not—be it caught
 Even in the thickets of his eyebrows shag,
 There let it melt at leisure ; he disdains
 To raise his gloveless hand to brush away
 The sleet that sparkles on his glowing cheek :
 'Tis but refreshment. Lifting up his face,
 With nostrils broad and large, the vigorous hairs
 Down growing thence, he snuffs the Norland blast,
 Clear, fresh, and free, rejoicing in the cold.

But more he loves, when on a gurdy morn
 The surly wind has roused the curly deep,
 And o'er the Eastern height he smells the sea,
 To take the headland bluff : seaward he stands,
 Sniffing the salt white spray, his own bluff face
 All red and pickled with the German brine.

Loose, large, and flowing to his convex point,
Our hero's ruffles, lo ! they bear a brooch,
Fast by his heart, with Charles the Martyr's hair.
An ancestor of Frank's fought well for Charles
Through all his wars ; and, on that eve of doom,
Kneeling he wept upon his Sovereign's knee :
The meek King called his child Elizabeth,
And made the Princess with her scissors cut
A small lock from his neck :—" Be it to thee,
My friend and brother, a memorial slight,
But best in its simplicity to one
Pure of self-seeking—a memorial slight
Of all that thou hast done for England's crown,
And this poor family." Thus the Martyr said,
Giving that token. And his servant took,
Kissed the gray hair, and pressed it to his heart.
A stout heart wears it still, a loyal heart and true.

A jolly bachelor Frank, in Sylvan Lodge,
Bosomed in woods, he keeps his easy state :
A squire of good broad acres, his old house
Is strong of beef, brown bread, and home-brewed ale ;
And at his buttery-hatch the wandering poor
Are aye regaled, and sent upon their way.
His country life has kept his salient points
Unblunted, red his cheek and fresh his heart ;
While rambles far through wild peculiar tribes
Have made him largely tolerant, and lent
A humorous twinkle to his keen gray eye.
All picturesque varieties of man,
All oddities of being, starting out
In bold relief from life's strange canvas, find
Grace in his eyes ; but wo to them that dare
Abuse discretion, for like any lynx
He looks them through and through, and, hot of blood,

Snorts in his ire, and drives them from his gate—
His gate still open to the modest poor !

For, generous as himself, his little niece,
Who rules his house with many opening keys,
Bears out his heart and hand—"Brown Molly" she
From her complexion ; but her clear brown face
Was cut with Beauty's chisel, clean and fine
In every feature ; fairy-like, her form
Is grace itself ; but oh her true young heart
Is more than beauty, and is more than grace.

FITTE THE SECOND.

Oh now the summer woods ! Oh now the joy
To haunt their tangled depths, with curious eye
Watching the wild folk of the leafy world,
From beetledom below to the high flight
Of shooting doves that shave the liquid air !
Such pastime has been Frank's, since first, a boy,
When lit the rising sun with level rays
The light green glimmering of the barley braird,
Empearled with dew, till all the trembling drops
Like sapphires glowed, he wondered at the hare
Hirpling therein, and sitting oft on end
With strange suspicious gestures—can it be
Old Eppie Tait, the witch ? and wondering saw
The horse-hair stirring in the shallow pool,
Left in the rut of the unmended road,
After warm rains by night—will it become
A lamprey, as they say ? and wondering found
The shrew-mouse lying with itsentrails out,
On the green path, where late at eve he passed
And saw it not : what killed it ?—was't the owl
By thing who pounced it for a common mouse,

And, out of temper at her own mistake,
Tore it to death, but scorned to taste a shrew?

Upspringing with the sun, Frank, every morn,
As every night, reads to his gathered house
The solemn service of the English Church,
Dear to his heart—a worship fitly framed
Betwixt the sensuous and emotional.
His stout old-fashioned breakfast o'er; he takes
His business room, and fits himself to speak
Of roads and bridges with his neighbour lairds;
Then forth into his garden, counsel there
To hold with the old gardener, or with ear
Patient attend his manifold complaints
Of birds unthinned, the bullfinch worst of all,
Whose cursèd beak—what can the fellow mean?
For worms he seeks not, nor one blossom eats—
Plays such wild havock with the apple buds.
“He’s a bad boy,” says Frank, and whistles off
Along the broad green walk, close-shaven, and paved
With soft moss like a carpet; and the maze
Of pleachèd walks, and alleys green o’erarched,
By holly bowers, and dials old and quaint,
Pacing he threads—for all the place, unlike
Your modern garden cut to the bare quick,
Is kept unshorn, a place of coy retreat.
Up then he gets into the old ash-tree,
To see the hissing owlets in their hole,
And speak to them; or in his pendulous swing
High sitting, moving to and fro, enjoy
The visitations of the flitting birds,
And all the cool refreshment of the leaves,
Rustling and breathing, with a dewy smell,
And all the glimmerings of the greening light.
Then deep he dives into the pathless woods,

And holds communion with the creatures there,
A numerous people ; for in all his bounds,
Protected by his humour or his love,
Easy they lead their unmolested lives.
So delicate his ear, he can detect
The faintest impulse that affects the tone
Of beast or bird, as circumstances change :
Has not the rook a harvest cry?—a slight
Percussive breathing through her usual note,
Somewhat analogous to the Irish brogue?—
A chuckle? that's too strong ; we'll call it, then,
The halitus of a spirit crowding through
Her fuller voice, like thanks for God's good corn?
Is this a fancy, or is this a fact?

Frank's pencil catches, quick of comic gust,
Queer things where'er he goes—the curly imp
Cocked on the donkey's rump, or whirled right o'er
Its lowered ears into the attempted ford ;
The camps of gipsies, and old beggars' heads.
Nor does he chuckle not when he has caught
A Latin scholar on unwonted steed ;
His heels turned closely in, his toes wide out ;
His trousers ruffled up unto his knees ;
His coat-tails pinned before him, to escape
The dusty hair of Rosinante's ribs ;
And, ever as he rises in his trot
With slow and solemn risings, the far-off
Horizon seen, a lucid interval,
Betwixt the saddle and his seat of honour.

And on goes Frank, and sees from many a point
The trees he planted in his youth fulfil
The picturesque design—the Scotch firs high
On gravelly ridge (best soil for them) to show
Their flaky foliage on the Eastern light,



Or in the embosomed wood with dark relief
Set off the lightness of the general green ;
And sycamores far off, a depth, a world
Of sultry languor in their summer heads.
But here the river bounds his woodland realm.
Steep his own banks of trees, yet steeper far
The opposing hill high up with hanging woods.
The cushat, startled from her ivied tree,
Comes clapping out above him, down right o'er
The river takes, and, folding her smooth wings,
Shoots like an arrow up the woody face
Of yon high steep, and o'er it bears away,—
The loveliest feat in all the flight of birds.
But oh the rarer charm, when yon green face
Is all astir with winds unheard so high,
Waving and swaying all, this way and that,
Opening and closing, intertwined, evolved,
With gestures all of love, low bowings, risings,
Kissings, slow courtesies, and tufted nods,
All flexible graces multitudinous !
Oh many a time, and long hours at a time,
Has Sylvan lain upon his sunny shore,
Rapt, more than gazing on the pictured show,
Silent though all in motion, till his soul,
Drowsed with the very fulness of the beauty,
Slumbered and saw not through the glimmering eye.

The farthest walk in his domain has brought
Frank to "The Plague Mount." Gray Tradition tells
That here the last struck of the spotted pest
Was buried far from men. Upon its top
Are sombre trees, and in the trees a seat ;
And on the seat aye Sylvan rests a while,
With changeful musings o'er life's darker things.
A half-sunk boulder on the Mount is called

"The Siller Stone." In popular legend, lies
A hoard of gold beneath it. Daring men
Have tried to dig it out; but aye a storm
Of lightning red, and thunder black with wrath,
Bursts, scares and drives them from the unfinished work.
Deepening the awe of the enchanted Mount,
A burn comes down a low and lonely glen,
And sleeps into a pool at its green feet,
Silent, profound, and black, "The Fairy Pool."
Seven boys, once bathing in the twilight there,
Were spirited away, and ne'er again
Came back to earth. Seven girls once playing there,
As home they passed from school, on the frail ice,
Went down together in the charmèd pool:
But they were found, and, on a weeping day,
Their virgin bodies in one grave were laid.
Here grows the earth-nut, with its slim green stalk,
Flat crowned with flowery white. The Mount's one side
Is soft with moss and broken earth, and there
Bare digging fingers may achieve its nuts.
But, tempted though he be, the schoolboy ne'er
Invades the Genius of the awe-guarded ground,
Alone. In knots the imps have sometimes dared
The desperate deed; but terror all the while
Disturbs their trembling fingers, as they trace
The tender white of the descending stalk
Down through the ground, which hardens as they dig,
And breaks the thread that guides them to the prize:
And so they lose it. If by chance they reach
The knobbèd nut, they break with their thumb-nail,
And peel the foul brown film of rind away
To the pure white, and taste it soft and frush.
They chew—they swallow not—they spit it out
With sputtering haste: 'tis earthy! 'tis the rank

And rotten flavour of the buried Plague !
Awe has them still—they gather close—they look
Into each other's faces—they behold
Strange meanings there—one fear infects the whole—
Breathless they break away, nor dare to turn
And look behind them to the ghostly Mount.

Homeward by other paths, Frank never fails,
With hat in hand, and reverence as of love,
To drink and rest at sweet St Mary's Well.
Cold, still, and glassy deep, a grassy brow
O'er shading it, here lies the virgin well.
Frost never films it, ne'er the Dog-star drinks
Its liquid brimming lower. Self-relieved,
By soft green dimples in its yielding lip,
The trembling fulness breaks, and, slipping o'er,
Cold bubbles through the grass; the infant spilth
Assumes a voice, and, gathering as it goes,
A runnel makes : how beautiful the green
Translucent lymph, crisp curling, purling o'er
The floating duckweed, lapsingly away !

His woodland walk accomplished, Sylvan lays
His right leg o'er his shelty, for a round
Of friendly visits of a summer day.
Thigh, leg, and toe turned round and in, the big
Toe-ball just resting on the stirrup, the heel
Depressed, and almost reaching to the ground,
Erect he sits on Donald ; shaggy he,
Long-tailed, long-maned, and tossing, as he moves,
The hair redundant o'er his fairy face,
Whence fitfully his glowing eyes look out.
And many a little dog, and many a large,
With sleek-licked swirls upon their glossy coats,
Attend the march, and round the master play.

The good old Scottish Gentlewoman, first,

Who, faithful to the good old way, still spins,
And speaks the good old Scotch, the classic tongue,
Not of a province, but an ancient realm,
Frank visits. Next, the rough old Commodore,
Who from his castellated cabin high
Telegraphs, with the system of his flags,
The valley far ; of many a tough old fight
The tough old remnant he, shattered and worn,
White "at the main:" but o'er a sea of grog
Ascending, reigns the Dog-star in his nose.

Next comes the Manse : And forth with Sylvan walks
The good old Pastor, shaking oft the head
Over the changes of our modern day.
The railway most he fears, spoiling our green
Sequestered valleys with its raw red scaurs,
And long dry banks of rubbish, spoiling more
Our picturesque simplicities of life,
Old points of character, old points of faith,
With social innovations manifold.
"Beautiful vale ! Vale of my Flock !" he sighs,
"Fear not the Winter, thou ; fear rather, thou,
The Mammon who would drive his railway train,
With whistle shrieking in its lust of gold,
Through the sweet music of thy Sabbath bells !
Let him not in ; oh keep the Demon out,
For there's no reverence in his golden hoof !
Give him but gradients to his mind, he'd drive
His trading rail right o'er the inhibited top
Of Sinai, through its awful sanctities,
As if they were the cheap amenities
Of some suburban villa : Keep him out !"

Frank takes the Nabob next : Him oft he finds
Standing beneath a tree : hours at a time,
With sour mahogany face against the day,

There will he stand. Cross-grained to all his folk,
They hold his conscience, not his liver, wrong :
An Indian prince he murdered for his gold—
So runs the whisper—horror-haunted thus,
Dark are his days, by night he dares not sleep
Without seven lighted candles round his bed.
Old Frank, of course, at all such nonsense laughs ;
And him the Nabob loves, flinging himself
With full abandonment, as if for help,
On the broad nature of the healthy man :
And Sylvan cheers him up, and he is cheered ;
But sinks relapsing when his friend is gone.

Thus hairy Donald, with short dibbling trot,
Bears his blithe master round from place to place.
Old Grayford last he visits : Him he finds
A-field ; his right hand with a hedgebill armed ;
His left laid down upon his swelling loin,
The palm turned out, the curved arm forming thus
The handle of the Lairdly Dignity.
Gray spats, white stockings, and a long gray coat,
Invest old Nimrod ; on his head is set
His small black hunting-cap of many a field—
Beneath its front his keen eye twinkles out,
Behind descends his venerable queue :
Tall, thin, and gray, walks the old man erect.
Due greetings o'er, Laird Grayford lays his hand
On Donald's mane, and by our hero stalks,
And has him round to look at hedge and drain,
And all his plantings :—"Here's a clump—this way—
Put in last Autumn, it seems getting up ?
What think you, eh ? In thirty years or so,
'Twill be a nice thing ; and by then I'll be
Pretty well buffed."—Old Nimrod's seventy now !
And much he growls of beggars, much of boys,

And tinkers, in defiance of the Act,
Pasturing their donkeys by the sides of roads;
And aye he sniffs, with nostril scornful thin,
At self-dubbed captains with their fishing-rods,
Who summer-haunt the village by the Hall,
And rob the ancient lordship of respect.
"Whom have we next?" keen looking out, demands
The jealous Laird, as o'er the knoll he spies
A waving rod: "One o' your captains, eh?
Of course: A man can't toss his glove up now,
But down it comes on a captain—Let's this way."

But Frank must home, and dine, and be prepared
Service to do with Moll; for old and young,
His neighbours round, from village and from farm
Invited, hold this night upon the lawn
The Annual Strawberry Feast of Sylvan Lodge.

FITTE THE THIRD.

Take, sportive Health, your tasselled horn and blow,
What time the breezes of the Autumnal hill
Lift your light locks of youth, and scatter them
In tangled beauty round your glowing face;
Call up old Sylvan to the mountain-side.

Pleasant to Sylvan when with Summer come
The twittering swallow and the shrilling swift;
Yet pleasanter, in Autumn's bracing air,
The hills of gorcocks and the hills of deer.
But oh the exhilaration when the furze,
Beneath the high hoar wood, is all astir
With fox-hound tails, just seen above the whins,
Cocked, curled, and crowding in one ferment thick.
Before one tongue, prelusive of the scent,
Has broken out, the experienced hunter knows,

By a fine sense instinctive, all's right now ;
And scarce restraining his impatient steed,
Fire-quick in consciousness of every move,
Pulls down his cap, and buttons up his coat.
One sure old beagle gives a deep-mouthed note,
A second—third—the pack : Away, away
Bursts through the echoing woods the storm of chase !
Old Frank is there ; with natural, healthy heart,
A daring huntress, Molly too is there.

When the last apple, yellowing into white,
Gleams in the leaves, Frank through the coloured woods
Saunters ; an amateur in rustic staves,
His vigilant shaping eye detects at once,
Though rough, half sunk in moss, the well-curved head
To the tall upward stalk, smooth-skinned and straight,
Or gnared with knots and knobs, with twists and crooks
Grotesque, and full of quaint, queer character ;
Forth then he draws his vigorous pruning-knife,
And adds another to the cudgel-sheaf
Which garnishes the lobby of his Lodge.

The air begins to nip : The plane-tree, first
With soft crimped leaf to burst the honey-glue
Of Spring's brown swelling bud—as well the boy
Knows, bent on whistles, when the sap is up,
And the moist bark comes peeling cleanly off—
Is first to shed her leaves ; down drop they now,
Dullest of sere, embossed with spots of black,
And foul feet tread them in the miry paths.
Cheer by his evening fire ! How Frank enjoys
The Sanctum of his books ! Byronic glooms
Have no place there, nor felons of romance,
Heroes of hemp, the glories of the gallows ;
But all the Saxon old simplicities.
And chief the Fathers of the English Church,

Of holy majesty and sweet composure,
Engage him, lifting up his heart's desire
To the good land of order, peace, and rest.

Clear-minded hence, up with the morn is Frank.
Gambol his dogs around him ; deep he wades
The rustling leaves of the October woods,
On through the crushed brown ferns of the high slope,
To look through the clear air : he loves to see
The varied faces of our Scottish hills.
Here grassiest green is one, with darker stripes
Where waters ooze away ; one mottled there
With black-brown heather and with verdant spots ;
A third, where lies the thin soil on the rock,
Swells smooth and round, but dun its juiceless grass ;
A herbless fourth's gray o'er with rocky stones,
Where thorn-trees old, and doddered ashes grow,
And rowans anchored in fantastic rifts :
High o'er its head the circling raven sails.

At penny-weddings, christenings, fairs, and kirns,
Our humorist prompts the rustic holiday.
The passing bell for village patriarch,
For simple maiden, or for thoughtful boy,
Smites on his ready heart ; and forth he helps
To bear them to the dust. But oftentimes, too,
Age-callous men, in coats of rustiest black,
With big horn buttons, generations old,
Trembling and fumbling in their eager greed,
All through the plate of service-bread, to find
The largest bits, and smacking their thin jaws
O'er the red solemn wine ; then, deaf and loud,
Clattering their gossip through the measured tread
On to the churchyard slow, has made old Frank
Snuff hard, repressing scarce his angry snort,
And lag behind the irreverent company.

Scotland, with all thy worth, irreverent thou,
In solemn things irreverent ; reverent less
Of Beauty, loving not the Beautiful?
Yes, tell it to her shame, no statue fair,
For admiration placed in open view,
No monumental work, but her rude sons
Deface it forthwith : France or Italy
Knows no such savagery, nor any land.
What can it mean? Is it our soul of sect,
Which looks on all such beauties of man's Art
As vanities, not unallied to sin?
Did not God make the Rainbow, coarse-grained soul?
His hands did they not bending fashion it?
Is that a vanity, is that a sin?

I, Beauty, dwell with Him who made green earth,
The pictured seasons, and the hosts of heaven.

Mellow the frosty noon : The yellow sun
Eats out the fire in filmy ashes white ;
Who cares a doit?—not Frank : the old chap, be sure,
With all his dogs is cheerily abroad.
Yon sliding boys, how blithe ! O happier day
Than wet home-prisoned days, when, sick of slates,
And books, and toys, they take their listless stand
At the dull window, and their noses squeeze,
Flattened till they be white, against the pane
Washed by the streaming, weltering drench without !
If hen, high lifting her unwilling feet,
Run dripping by ; or random waddling duck,
Half swimming, slabber, with her bill engulfed,
Through the green pool ; or snouted sow upturn
The reeking dunghill,—better sight than this
Their vacant eye may hope not, as they stand
And idly look into the dim drear day.

The boy can swim ! By day he thinks, by night

He dreams of swimming. Prone upon the sward,
Or snuglier lying in the clover field,
Sucking the honeyed flowers, even there the pride
Of conscious power comes o'er him, out he strikes
With hands and feet, unmindful how the grass
Or clover leaves green-stain his corduroys.
Each summer day, three times at least he takes
The gravelly pool, and wriggles to make way,
Till short and feeble grow his plunging strokes,
Quick, quicker sinks his head, his panting breath
Scarce puffs the lipping water from his mouth,
And his teeth chatter and his nails be blue.
Behold him now ! Bent forward on his hams
Beside the burn, his hands he pushes out,
In swimming fashion, from below his nose,
And seems to meditate the unfrozen depth.
Oh no, he'll not jump in ; but pleased he sees
How he could stem it, and with eager heart
Longs for the coming of the summer sun.

But lo ! the old mill : Down to it hies our imp,
Following the dam. The outer wheel still black,
Though sleeked with gleety green, and candied o'er
With ice, is doing duty. In he goes
By the wide two-leaved door ; all round he looks
Throughout the dusty atmosphere, but sees
No miller there. The mealy cobwebs shake
Along the wall, a squeaking rat comes out,
And sits and looks at him with steadfast eye.
He hears the grinding's smothered sound, a sound
Lonelier than silence : Memory summons up
The "Thirlstane Pedlar" murdered in a mill,
And buried there : The "Meal-cap Miller," too,
In "God's Revenge on Murder" bloody famed,
Comes o'er his spirit. Add to this the fear

Of human seizure, for he meditates
A boyish multure : Stepping stealthily
On tiptoe, looking round, he ventures on ;
Thrusts both his hands into the oatmeal heap,
Warm from the millstones ; and, in double dread
Of living millers and of murdered pedlars,
Flies with his booty, licking all the way.

Homeward returning by the upland path,
Old Sylvan stands and listens : Through the meek
Still day, from far-off places comes the long,
Smooth, level booming of the channel-stones.
Roar goes a stone adown some nearer rink ;
Right, left it strikes : triumphant shouts proclaim
A last great shot has revolutionised
The crowded tee. Down in the valley, lo !
The broom-armed knights upon their gleaming board.
Such rural sports beguile the winter day.

But good old Christmas comes, and holds its state
In Sylvan Lodge, as in the antique time.
And Captain Mavor's there from Eastern lands,
And all is merry cheer and holy joy.
Frank was his father's friend, and, ere he died,
Was named by him the guardian of the boy ;
And through long conflicts of disputed rights
He bore his ward triumphantly, and sent
Young George to India, an accomplished youth,
To be a soldier there : But, ere he went,
With Molly Sylvan he had vows exchanged ;
And she, and none but she, shall be his wife.
Prudent, and valiant in the field, he rose ;
And Aliwal and bloody Sobraon
Fulfilled the promise of his earlier years.
" Come to your window, Lilla Zal, and see
Those blue-eyed islanders, lords of the earth,"

Thus said a dark-eyed damsel of Lahore
To her young sister. And they stood and saw
That little company ride glorious in,
Sublime in their considerate modesty,
And empires stricken by a band so small.
And much they wondered at the fair-haired men,
As they rode by ; but Mavor's beauteous youth
Drew forth the murmurs of their glad surprise.
Proud day was that to all those British men ;
But Mavor now is happier where he is,
With old Frank Sylvan and his nut-brown maid.

Labour, Art, Worship, Love, these make man's life :
How sweet to spend it here ! Beautiful dale,
What time the virgin favour of the Spring
Bursts in young lilies, they are first in thee ;
Thine lavish Summer lush of luminous green,
And Autumn glad upon thy golden crofts.
Let Winter come : on January morn,
Down your long reach, how soul-inspiring,
Far in the frosty yellow of the East,
To see the flaming horses of the Sun
Come galloping up on the untrodden year !
If storm-flaws more prevail, hail, crusted snows,
And blue-white thaws upon the spotty hills,
With dun swollen floods, they pass and hurt thee not ;
They but enlarge, with sympathetic change,
The thoughtful issues of thy dwellers' hearts.
Here, happy thus, far from the scarlet sins,
From bribes, from violent ways, the anxious mart
Of money-changers, and the strife of tongues,
Fearing no harm of plague, no evil star
Bearded with wrath, his spirit finely touched
To life's true harmonies, old Sylvan dwells,
Deep in the bosom of his native dale.

Muse, thou'rt a Prophetess as well as Muse ;
Lift up the corner of Time's veil :—Behold !
Light fairy forms, the Genii of the wood,
The dappled mountain, and the running stream,
Are strewing favours on the old man's grave,
While many a little bird his requiem sings.
George Mavor Sylvan dwells, in thoughtful peace,
With Mary Sylvan in old Sylvan Lodge.

THE CHAMPION.

HOPE, with eyes of sunny seed,
Smile thee on to power and deed,

Champion, who the sword dost draw
For Order, Liberty, and Law.

O'er the heads of foes advance,
Victor, lord of maintenance.

Work the work. From blood abhorred
Turn the face, and sheathe the sword,

Patriot, with the temperate eyes,
Set to Reason's harmonies.

Reverence on thy coming wait,
Princes meet thee in the gate !

AN EVENING WALK.

THE Patriarch mild, who mused at evening-tide,
 Saw blessings come : they who with ordered feet
 Go forth like him, their blessings too shall meet,—
 Beauty, and Grace, and Peace, harmonious side by side ;

Whether the down purpled with thyme they tread,
 Woodland, or marge of brook, or pathway sweet
 By the grave rustling of the heavy wheat,
 Singing to thankful souls the song of coming bread.

The restless whitethroat warbles through the copse ;
 High sits the thrush and pipes the tree upon ;
 Cloud-flushed the west, a sunny shower comes on ;
 Up goes the twinkling lark through the clear slanting
 drops.

In straight stiff lines sweet Nature will not run :
 The lark comes down—mute now, wings closed, no check,
 Sheer down he drops ; but back he curves his neck,
 Look, too, he curves his fall just ere his nest be won.

'Here stands The Suffering Elm : in days of yore
 Three martyrs hung upon its bending bough ;
 Its sympathetic side, from then till now
 Weeping itself away, drops from that issuing sore.

Dryads, and Hamadryads ; bloody groans
Bubbling for vent, when twigs are torn away
In haunted groves ; incessant, night and day,
Gnarled in the knotted oak, the pent-up spirit's moans ;

And yonder trembling aspen, never still,
Since of its wood the rueful Cross was made,—
All these, incarnated by Fancy's aid,
Are but extended Man, in life, and heart, and will.

Your eye still shifting to the setting sun,
The diamond-drops upon the glistening thorns
Are topazes and emeralds by turns ;
Twinkling they shake, and aye they tremble into one.

Clouds press the sinking orb : he strikes a mist
Of showery purple on the forest-tops,
The western meadows, and the skirting slopes ;
Down comes the stream, a lapse of living amethyst.

We tread on legends all this storied land :
Dull flows yon ferry through the mountains black
With pinewood galleries far withdrawing back ;
Man's heart is also there, and dwarfs those summits
grand :

The virgin martyrs, half the ferry o'er,
By ruthless men were plunged into the tide,
Singing their holy psalm ; away it died,
Bubbling in death. The moon a blood-red sorrow wore.

And aye, they tell, when wan and all forlorn
Sickening she looks upon our world of wrong,
And would be gone for ever, far along
The mournful ferry dim that dying psalm is borne.

Yon peasant swarth, his day of labour done,
Pipes at his cottage door ; his wife sits by,
Dancing their baby to the minstrelsy :
To temperate gladness they their sacred right have won.

Rest after toil, sweet healing after pain ;
Repent, and so be loved, O stubborn-vice—
The Tishbite girt severe runs before Christ :
Such is the double law complete to mortal men.

Yon lordly pine bends his complying head
To eve's soft breath, and the stupendous cloud
Shifts silently : Man's world is fitliest bowed
By power when gently used : Force not, love thou instead.

One cool green gleam on yonder woodland high,
And Day retires ; gray Twilight folds with dew
The hooded flowers ; in gulfs of darkening blue
The starry worlds come out to Contemplation's eye.

Home now to sleep. No part in all man's frame
But has its double uses, firm to keep,
Help this, round that, and beautify ; of sleep,
Complex of sweet designs, how finely 'tis the same.

Touched with the solemn harmonies of night,
Down do we lie, our spirits to repair,
And, fresh ourselves, make morning fresh and fair ;
Sleep too our Father gave to soften death's affright :

In sleep we lapse and lose ourselves away,
And thus each night our death do we rehearse.
Oh, at the last, may we the oblivion pierce
Of death, as ay of sleep, and rise unto the day.

THE
DEVIL'S DREAM ON MOUNT AKSBECK.

BEYOND the north where Ural hills from polar tempests
run,
A glow went forth at midnight hour as of unwonted sun ;
Upon the north at midnight hour a mighty noise was
heard,
As if with all his trampling waves the Ocean were un-
barred ;
And high a grizzly Terror hung, upstarting from below,
Like fiery arrow shot aloft from some unmeasured bow.

'Twas not the obedient Seraph's form that burns before
the Throne,
Whose feathers are the pointed flames that tremble to be
gone :
With twists of faded glory mixed, grim shadows wove
his wing ;
An aspect like the hurrying storm proclaimed the Infer-
nal King.
And up he went, from native might, or holy sufferance
given,
As if to strike the starry boss of the high and vaulted
heaven.

Aloft he turned in middle air like falcon for his prey,
And bowed to all the winds of heaven as if to flee
away ;

Till broke a cloud—a phantom host, like glimpses of a
dream,

Sowing the Syrian wilderness with many a restless gleam :
He knew the flowing chivalry, the swart and turbaned
train,

That far had pushed the Moslem faith, and peopled well
his reign :

With stooping pinion that outflew the Prophet's wingèd
steed,

In pride throughout the desert bounds he led the phan-
tom speed ;

But prouder yet he turned alone and stood on Tabor
hill,

With scorn as if the Arab swords had little helped his
will :

With scorn he looked to west away, and left their train
to die,

Like a thing that had awaked to life from the gleaming
of his eye.

What hill is like to Tabor hill in beauty and in fame?
There in the sad days of His flesh o'er Christ a glory
came ;

And light outflowed Him like a sea, and raised His shin-
ing brow ;

And the Voice went forth that bade all worlds to God's
Belovèd bow.

One thought of this came o'er the Fiend, and raised his
startled form ;

And up he drew his swelling skirts as if to meet the storm.

With wing that stripped the dews and birds from off the
 boughs of night,
 Down over Tabor's trees he whirled his fierce distem-
 pered flight ;
 And westward o'er the shadowy earth he tracked his
 earnest way,
 Till o'er him shone the utmost stars that hem the skirts
 of day ;
 Then higher 'neath the sun he flew above all mortal ken,
 Yet looked what he might see on earth to raise his pride
 again.

He saw a form of Africa low sitting in the dust ;
 The feet were chained, and sorrow thrilled throughout
 the sable bust.
 The idol, and the idol's priest he hailed upon the earth,
 And every slavery that brings wild passions to the
 birth.
 All forms of human wickedness were pillars of his
 fame,
 All sounds of human misery his kingdom's loud acclaim.

Exulting o'er the rounded earth again he rode with
 Night,
 Till, sailing o'er the untrodden top of Aksbeck high and
 white,
 He closed at once his weary wings, and touched the shin-
 ing hill ;
 For less his flight was easy strength than proud uncon-
 quered will :
 For sin had dulled his native strength, and spoilt the holy
 law
 Of impulse whence the Archangels their earnest being
 draw.

And sin had drunk his brightness, since his heavenly
 days went by :
 Shadows of care and sorrow dwelt in his proud immortal
 eye ;
 Like little sparry pools that glimpse 'midst murk and
 haggard rocks,
 Quick fitful gleams came o'er his cheek black with the
 thunder-strokes ;
 Like coast of lurid darkness were his forehead's shade
 and light,
 Lit by some far volcanic fire, and strewed with wrecks of
 night.

Like hovering bird that fears the snare, or like the
 startled Sleep
 That ne'er its couch on eyelids of blood-guilty men will
 keep,
 His ruffled form that trembled much, his swarthy soles
 unblest,
 As if impatient to be gone, still hovering could not rest ;
 Still looking up unto the moon clear set above his head,
 Like mineral hill where gold grows ripe, sore gleams his
 forehead shed.

Winds rose : from 'neath his settling feet were driven
 great drifts of snow ;
 Like hoary hair from off his head did white clouds
 streaming go ;
 The gulfy pinewoods far beneath roared surging like a sea ;
 From out their lairs the striding wolves came howling
 awfully.
 But now upon an ice-glazed rock, severely blue, he leant,
 His spirit by the storm composed that round about him
 went.

44 THE DEVIL'S DREAM ON MOUNT AKSBECK.

In nature's Joy he felt fresh night blow on his fiery
- scars;
In proud Regret he fought anew his early hapless wars;
From human misery lately seen, his Malice yet would
draw
A hope to blast one plan of God, and check sweet Mercy's
law;
An endless line of future years was stern Despair's
control:
And deep these master Passions wove the tempest of his
soul.

Oh for the form in Heaven that bore the morn upon his
brow!
Now, run to worse than mortal dross, that Lucifer must
bow.
And o'er him rose, from Passion's strife, like spray-cloud
from the deep,
A slumber; not the Cherub's soft and gauzy veil of sleep,
But like noon's breathless thunder-cloud, of sultry
smothered gleam.
And God was still against his soul to plague him with a
dream.

In vision he was borne away, where Lethe's slippery
wave
Creeps like a black and shining snake into a silent cave,—
A place of still and pictured life: its roof was ebon air,
And blasted as with dim eclipse the sun and moon were
there:
It seemed the grave of man's lost world—of Beauty
caught by blight.
The Dreamer knew the work he marred, and felt a
Fiend's delight.

The lofty cedar on the hills by viewless storms was
 swung,
 And high the thunder-fires of Heaven among its branches
 hung ;
 In drowsy heaps of feathers sunk, all fowls that fly were
 there,
 The head for ever 'neath the wing, no more to rise in
 air ;
 From woods the forms of lions glared, and hasty tigers
 broke ;
 The harnessed steed lay in his pains, the heifer 'neath
 the yoke.

All creatures once of earth are there, all sealed with
 Death's pale seal
 On Lethe's shore : dull sliding by her sleepy waters
 steal.
 O'er cities of imperial name, and styled of endless sway,
 The silent river slowly creeps, and licks them all away.
 This is the place of God's First Wrath—the mute crea-
 tion's fall—
 Earth marred—the woes of lower life—oblivion over all.

Small joy to him who marred our world ! for he is hur-
 ried on,
 Made, even in dreams, to dread that place where yet he
 boasts his throne :
 Through portals driven, a horrid pile of grim and hol-
 low bars,
 Wherein clear spirits of tinctured life career in prisoned
 wars,
 Down on the Second Lake he's bowed, where final fate
 is wrought,
 In meshes of eternal fire, o'er beings of moral thought.

Vast rose abrupt (Hell's Throne) a rock dusk-red of
 mineral glow,
 Its tortured summit hid in smoke, from out the gulf
 below,
 Whose fretted surf of gleaming waves still broke against
 its sides.
 Serpents of Sorrow, spun from out the lashings of those
 tides,
 Sprung disengaged, and darted up that damnèd cliff
 amain,
 Their bellies skinned with glossy fire : But none came
 down again.

Far off, upon the fire-burnt coast, some naked beings
 stood ;
 And o'er them, like a stream of mist, the Wrath was seen
 to brood.
 At half-way distance stood, with head beneath his trem-
 bling wing,
 An Angel shape, intent to shield his special suffering.
 And nearer, as if overhead, were voices heard to break ;
 Yet were they cries of souls that lived beneath the welter-
 ing Lake.

And ever, as with grizzly gleam the crested waves came on,
 Up rose a melancholy form with short impatient moan,
 Whose eyes like living jewels shone, clear-purgèd by the
 flame ;
 And sore the salted fires had washed the thin immortal
 frame ;
 And backward, in sore agony, the Being stripped its
 locks,
 As a maiden in her beauty's pride her claspèd tresses
 strokes.

High tumbling hills of glossy ore reeled in the yellow
 smoke,
 As shaded round the uneasy land their sultry summits
 broke.
 Above them lightnings to and fro ran crossing ever-
 more,
 Till, like a red bewildered map, the skies were scribbled
 o'er.
 High in the unseen cupola o'er all were ever heard
 The mustering stores of Wrath that fast their coming
 forms prepared.

Wo, wo to him whose wickedness first dug this glaring
 pit !
 For this new terrors in his soul by God shall yet be
 lit.
 In vision still to plague his heart, the Fiend is stormed
 away,
 In dreadful emblem to behold what waits his future
 day ;
 Away beyond the thundering bounds of that tremendous
 Lake,
 Through dim bewildered shadows which no living sem-
 blance take.

O'er soft and unsubstantial shades which towering
 visions seem,
 Through kingdoms of forlorn repose, went on the hurrying
 dream ;
 Till down where feet of hills might be, he by a Lake was
 stayed
 Of still red fire—a molten plate of terror unallayed—
 A mirror where Jehovah's Wrath, in majesty alone,
 Comes in the night of worlds to see its armour girded on.

48 THE DEVIL'S DREAM ON MOUNT AKSBECK.

The awful walls of shadows round might dusky mountains seem,
But never holy light hath touched an outline with its gleam ;
'Tis but the eye's bewildered sense that fain would rest on form,
And make night's thick blind presence to created shapes conform.
No stone is moved on mountain here by creeping creature crossed ;
No lonely harper comes to harp upon this fiery coast.

Here all is solemn idleness : no music here, no jars,
Where Silence guards the coast, e'er thrill her everlasting bars.
No sun here shines on wanton isles ; but o'er the burning sheet
A rim of restless halo shakes, which marks the internal heat ;
As, in the days of beauteous earth, we see with dazzled sight
The red and setting sun o'erflow with rings of welling light.

Oh ! here in dread abeyance lurks of uncreated things
The Last Lake of God's Wrath, where He his first great Enemy brings.
Deep in the bosom of the gulf the Fiend was made to stay,
Till, as it seemed, ten thousand years had o'er him rolled away :
In dreams he had extended life to bear the fiery space ;
But all was passive, dull, and stern within his dwelling-place.

Oh for a blast of tenfold ire to rouse the giant surge,
 Him from that flat fixed lethargy impetuously to urge !
 Let him but rise, but ride upon the tempest-crested wave
 Of fire enridged tumultuously, each angry thing he'd
 brave !

The strokes of Wrath—thick let them fall ! a speed so
 glorious dread

Would bear him through ; the clinging pains would strip
 from off his head.

At last, from out the barren womb of many thousand
 years,

A sound as of the green-leaved earth his thirsty spirit
 cheers ;

And, oh, a presence soft and cool came o'er his burning
 dream,

A form of beauty clad about with fair creation's beam ;

A low sweet voice was in his ear, thrilled through his
 inmost soul,

And these the words that bowed his heart with softly sad
 control :—

“ No sister e'er hath been to thee with pearly eyes of
 love ;

No mother e'er hath wept for thee, an outcast from
 above ;

No hand hath come from out the cloud to wash thy
 scarrèd face ;

No voice to bid thee lie in peace, the noblest of thy
 race :

But bow thee to the God of Love, and all shall yet be
 well,

And yet in days of holy peace and love thy soul shall
 dwell.

"And thou shalt dwell 'mid leaves and rills far from this
 torrid heat,
 And I with streams of cooling milk will bathe thy blistered feet;
 And when the troubled tears shall start to think of all
 the past,
 My mouth shall haste to kiss them off, and chase thy
 sorrows fast;
 And thou shalt walk in soft white light with kings and
 priests abroad,
 And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the hills of
 God."

So spake the unknown Cherub's voice, of sweet affection
 full,
 And dewy lips the dreamer kissed till his lava breast was
 cool.
 In dread revulsion woke the Fiend, as from a mighty
 blow,
 And sprung a moment on his wing his wonted strength
 to know;
 Like ghosts that bend and glare on dark and scattered
 shores of night,
 So turned he to each point of heaven to know his dream
 aright.

The vision of this Last Stern Lake, oh how it plagued his
 soul,
 Type of that dull eternity which on him soon must roll,
 When plans and issues all must cease which earlier care
 beguiled,
 And never era more shall be a landmark on the wild:
 Nor failure nor success is there, nor busy hope nor fame,
 But passive fixed endurance, all eternal and the same.

So knew the Fiend, and fain would he down to oblivion
go;

But back from fear his spirit proud, recoiling like a bow,
Sprung. O'er his head he saw the heavens upstay'd
bright and high;

The planets, undisturbed by him, were shining in the
sky;

The silent magnanimity of Nature and her God
With anguish smote his haughty soul, and sent his Hell
abroad.

His pride would have the works of God to show the signs
of fear,

And flying Angels to and fro to watch his dread career;
But all was calm: He felt night's dew upon his sultry
wing,

And gnashed at the impartial laws of Nature's mighty
King;

Above control, or show of hate, they no exception made,
But gave him dew, like aged thorn, or little grassy
blade.

Terrible, like the mustering manes of the cold and curly
sea,

So grew his eye's enridged gleams; and doubt and
danger flee:

Like veteran band's grim valour slow, that moves to
avenge its chief,

Up slowly drew the Fiend his form, that shook with
proud relief:

And he will upward go, and pluck the windows of high
Heaven,

And stir their calm insulting peace, though tenfold Hell
be given.

52 THE DEVIL'S DREAM ON MOUNT AKSBECK.

Quick as the levin, whose blue forks lick up the life of
man,
Aloft he sprung, and through his wings the piercing
north-wind ran ;
Till, like a glimmering lamp that's lit in lazar-house by
night,
To see what mean the sick man's cries, and set his bed
aright,
Which in the damp and sickly air the sputtering shadows
mar,
So gathered darkness high the Fiend, till swallowed
like a star.

What judgment from the tempted Heavens shall on his
head go forth ?
Down headlong through the firmament he fell upon the
north.
The stars are up untroubled all in the lofty fields of air :
The will of God's enough, without His red right arm
made bare.
'Twas He that gave the Fiend a space, to prove him still
the same ;
Then bade wild Hell, with hideous laugh, be stirred her
prey to claim.

THE RIVER.

INFANT of the weeping hills,
Nursling of the springs and rills,
Growing River, flowing ever,
Wimpling, dimpling, staying never,—
Lisping, gurgling, ever going,
Lipping, slipping, ever flowing,
Toying round the polished stone,
Kiss the sedge and journey on.
Here's a creek where bubbles come,
Whirling make your ball of foam.
There's a nook so deep and cool,
Sleep into a glassy pool.
Breaking, gushing,
Downward rushing,
Narrowing green against the bank,
Where the alders grow in rank,—
Thence recoiling,
Outward boiling,
Fret, in rough shingly shallows wide,
Your difficult way to yonder side.
Thence away, aye away,
Bickering down the sunny day,
In the Sea, in yonder West,
Lose yourself, and be at rest.

Thus from darkness weeping out,
Flows our infant Life away,
Murmuring now the checks about,
Singing now in onward play;
Deepening, whirling,
Darkly swirling,
Downward sucked in eddying coves,
Boiling with tumultuous loves;
Widening o'er the worldly sands;
Kissing full the cultured lands;
Dim with trouble, glory-lit,
Heaven still bending over it;
Changing still, yet ever going,
Onward, downward ever flowing.

Oh to be a boy once more,
Curly-headed, sitting singing
'Mid a thousand flowerets springing,
In the sunny days of yore,
In the sunny world remote,
With feelings opening in their dew,
And fairy wonders ever new,
And all the budding quicks of thought !
Oh to be a boy, yet be
From all my early follies free !
But were I skilled in prudent lore,
The boy were then a boy no more.

Short our threescore years and ten,
Yet who would live them o'er again ?
All life's good, ere they be flown,
We have felt, and we have known.
More than mortal were our fear,
If doomed to dwell for ever here.

Yet oh, from age to age, that we
Might rise a day old earth to see !

Mountains, high with nodding firs,
O'er you the clouded crystal stirs,
Fresh as of old, how fresh and sweet !
And here the flowerets at my feet.
Daisy, daisy, wet with dew,
And all ye little bells of blue,
I know you all ; thee, clover bloom,
Thee the fern, and thee the broom :
And still the leaves and breezes mingle
With twinklings in the forest dingle.
Oh through all wildering worlds I'd know
My own dear place of long ago.
Pleased would the yearning spirit then
The doings learn of living men,
The rise and fall of realms and kings,
And, oh, a thousand homely things.
Deeper our care considerate
To know of earth's diviner state :
How speeds the Church, with horns of light,
To push and pierce the Heathen night ?
What promise of the coming day,
When Sin and Pain shall pass away,
And, under Love's perpetual prime,
Joy light the waving wings of Time ?

THE CHRISTIAN BRIDE.

PART FIRST.

YOUNG Torthil sits below the woody steeps
 Of Apennine, beneath a spreading oak.
 His downcast eye a stern abstraction keeps;
 Dawn not for him with purple stains has broke,
 Nor sunshine filled the world: the captive's yoke
 Is on his heart—bright things are not for him.
 The cloudy day, the high-winged tempest's shock
 Would more delight him, with unbounded limb
 Swift o'er far Morven's hills, throughout her forests dim.

Who knows not Torthil from Ausonia's bound
 Of Alps Helvetian to her southern heel?
 Now homeward musing o'er the vast profound,
 The fisher sees him by the ocean kneel;
 Now o'er the mountains with impetuous zeal
 He strikes the tusky monster with his spear;
 The chamois leaps, the bird in airy wheel
 Screams to his piercing arrow: far and near,
 Scorning a life in Rome, he takes the wild severe.

There Torthil sits. Up looking now he sees
 A damsel reading, shaded from the heat,

Beautiful, walking in the myrtle-trees
On yonder bank, forth now in sunlight sweet,
Now glimmering back into the shy retreat
Of twilight green. But hark ! adown the vale
A tumult comes, the wild boar gallops fleet,
Two dogs close track him grinning to assail.
Far echoes tell the pack are on some other trail.

Fled has the damsel. Torthil's o'er the brook.
Behind she hears the panting brute advance,
Nearer, and nearer still ; she turns to look—
O terror ! joy ! her eye's bewildered trance
Hangs crowded thick with death and life at once :
The monster's sidelong, half-upturning head
Is gnarled to strike, his bared tusks backward glance
To gather fury for his onset dread,
To tear her tender limb—bold Torthil's lance has sped.

But ah ! he stumbles from his forceful blow ;
The beast transfixed, disdaining yet to fly,
Has bowed his levelled head, and, ploughing low
As if to pass his rising enemy,
With tearing side-stroke rips his spouting thigh ;
Then forward staggers, darkly crushed to fall ;
But bites his fiery wound ere he will die,
Snaps with his teeth that shaft of deadly gall,
And grinds with foam and blood the spluttered splinters
small.

Turned to the rescued maid, along the brow
Of Torthil lightens a heroic smile ;
Till, o'er his drained benumbed limb forced to bow,
To earth succumbs he, gazing yet the while
On her whose presence can his pains beguile.

But she for him her silken vesture tears,
Binds his stanch'd wound with pity's gentlest wile;
Cold sprinklings then from out the stream she bears,
Refreshes his sick face, his fainting strength repairs.

"And spare," he said, "for me those wistful fears.
Wonder divine! thee in a dream of yore
Twice did I see—mine own! Not years, long years,
Could make me know, could make me love thee more.
My heart's last blood I'd give thee o'er and o'er!
I would but have thee know me should I die:
Afar I come from Caledonia's shore,
Torthil my name, a chieftain there was I;
A captive next—nay, sent thy safety thus to buy.

"I am a savage; but in thy sweet sight
To live, would make me gentle soon, and wise.
Would thou couldst love me!" With impassioned might
He strove, nor vainly, from the ground to rise.
The light was thickened in his heavy eyes;
He fell, yet falling kissed her dear young feet.
Alone the fainting Caledonian lies,
The maid in haste has sought the wood's retreat;
But soon she reappears with new assistance meet.

A reverend father and a female old
Come to her guidance, and the youth upraise;
His drooping head the virgin's hands uphold:
Borne o'er the rivulet, through the woodland maze,
Where many a path the uncertain foot betrays,
A cave withdrawn into the mountain's side,
Received them from the forest's puzzling ways.
There Father Hippo healing bands supplied;
And there, till he wax well, young Torthil shall abide.

But oft Roscrana came, that Princess good,
Niece of Zenobia, Tadmor's famous Queen,
Who, since Aurelian had her throne subdued,
With honour placed in Italy had been.
A huntress, she her summer dwelling green
Chose near the central mountains of the land.
Fair daughters round her graced the sylvan scene ;
But she, and they, a haughty sister-band,
Roscrana's meekness scorned, and ruled her with high
hand.

Yet more divided from her kindred blood,
Roscrana's heart confessed our holy faith ;
Nursed by a Christian Jewess, and imbued
With early love for Him of Nazareth,
She to His Cross will cling unto the death.
The sovereign knowledge fain would she declare
To her proud kin, but still they shunned her path ;
Then sought she solace in the woods, and there
She found the cave proscribed of that old Christian pair.

They o'er the Syrian orphan, as their child,
Rejoiced, that dear faith mutually confessed.
More than a daughter, she their fears beguiled,
She brought them food, she watched their aged rest,
Fit garments wrought by her their bodies dressed.
For this, the scrolls of the Eternal Word
Given by those saints, she hid beneath her vest,
Till to the night, to shady walks restored,
She drew them forth and read of her incarnate Lord.

Within the cavern of those Christians laid,
With plants of healing gathered from the hill,
Was Torthil cured by that Palmyran maid,
Oh more to love her for her gentle skill.

And soon he blessed those days of wounded ill,
For aye young pity trembles into love ;
Lord of her heart is he and virgin will.
And aye to him of Jesus from above
She reads, or in the cave, or walking through the grove.

Sequestered they in love's unworldly dream,
In haunts of beauty lose the lapsing hours.
Forth by the lake, down by the living stream,
They dip their footsteps in the dewy flowers.
The glad birds twinkle from their morning bowers.
Noon's sultry silence on the forest broods.
Eve flushes soft : clear glance the sunny showers :
The mountains smile with all their hanging woods :
Lustre in all the vales, lustre on all the floods !

The stock-dove's voice, sweet intermittent bird,
That aye the shadow of the hawk's wing fears,
Crushed in the depth of leaves, and faintly heard,
Moaning of love, the twilight hour endears
To the young lovers. Lo ! the Moon appears ;
Beauty and Peace lead on the silver Queen ;
The forests, brightening silently, she clears ;
She walks the mountains ; o'er the polished sheen
Of dimpling rivers far her sliding feet are seen.

Another eve : turned to the lord of day,
" So sinks," said Torthil, " the immortal flame.
I too go down : back takes he on his way
His retrospect ; if I should do the same,
Pride overthrown, youth crushed, the baffled aim,
Defeat, and exile from my native shore,
Are my memorials—felt by me, for shame
Was never in my father's house ; yet sore [more.
Though be my pangs for these, my country plagues me

"For me her youth into the battle's waste
She poured, she perished at my sole command.
Was this not much? Am I not all disgraced?
The exulting rivers of my native land,
These are not they—a captive here I stand.
Why fell I not? Yea, farther hear my shame:—
Lady, I chose to stoop beneath their band
Which binds me by the honour of my name,
Since slain not here in Rome, my freedom ne'er to claim,

"Ne'er to attempt return. Oh, I might say,
My very wish that shame to uncreate
Forbade my death, throughout the slavish day
Of circumstances bade me tamely wait
Some better morn of fortune or of fate.
What then? Unbounded blame is still my due
For you betrothed to my forlorn estate.
'Tis time to question thus myself for you,—
What hope contrive, sweet maid, what plan shall I pursue?

"This I might do—Oh, I no more can live
For thee to see me in my slavery!—
Yes, I will do it—I will go—will give
My life again from vows to be set free;
They gall me so! His slave I will not be;
I'll go, I'll brave him on his Roman throne.
Ha! first I'll promise to mine enemy
Long years of service in his battles done;
For thee with power fulfilled, he'll let me then be gone.

"Then home with me to Morven shalt thou go,
And be a daughter to my mother there.
There forth I'll lead thee by the hand, and show
The green translucent brine, when mermaids rare

Chant on the rocks and comb their slippery hair ;
The bliss of morn, clear wells, and forests green ;
The pure suffusion of the evening air,
When dipped in delicate lights far hills are seen.
Bards with their stately songs shall close our day serene.

" Ha ! idle visions these ! Why am I here ?
Sweet Lady, come with me unto our cave ;
Then home I'll guide thee. Ere next noon appear,
Aurelian hears me ; wise, and just, and brave,
He'll grant the death of freedom that I crave.
Oh, not in vain last night in dreams did come
To me my mother, pale as from the grave ;
Yet smiled the vested image from her home
O'er the wan waters far, over the travelled foam."

Within the cave they wait the evening star.
But came Zenobia, beautifully keen ;
Behind her thronging entered men of war ;
A Jewish dwarf, misshapen, ugly, lean,
Who long her servant in the East had been,
Led on the party : he, of Christ the foe,
Had learned Roscrana's faith, had brought his Queen
Her doubtful haunt, her friends proscribed to know.
O'erpowered now must they all before Aurelian go.

Yea, worse than vain was Torthil's manly haste
His name to tell, his passion to declare ;
Vain priestly Hippo's act, before them placed,
To wed Roscrana to her Torthil there.
Joy then be with them, a divided pair !
The Imperial lady with a deadly smile
Swore (for the Cæsar ne'er denies her prayer)
Dark dungeon chains shall Torthil have the while,
Roscrana banished be to some far foreign isle.

Aurelian ratified the stern decree ;
But yielded this to Torthil young and brave,—
That his dear wife, since banished she must be,
Should go to Morven o'er the western wave,
To soothe his mother drooping to the grave ;
A widow she, and he far from her ta'en,
Her only son, to be a captive slave.
But Hippo and his wife their freedom gain,
To enhance Zenobia's wrath against that youthful twain.

PART SECOND.

In Morven's woody land, Roscrana kissed
Her Torthil's mother at her tale amazed ;
Then lowly bowed the virgin to be blest :
" My far-come daughter ! " Cathla said, and raised,
And still with wonder on the lady gazed,
" If thou indeed art Torthil's chosen bride ;
Yea, well that forehead's beauty undebased
Beseems the scion of a Prince's side :
Worthy art thou to be my Torthil's spouse of pride.

" Thou from the dowried kingdoms of the East,
To lands of poor but of heroic men
Art come ; yet court nor oriental feast
Will make thy sweet soul scorn our humblest den.
But when great wars befall, my daughter then
Shall bless the safety that wild Morven yields ;
Then shall her sons, from mountain and from glen,
Hang round about thee with their sounding shields :
They for young Torthil's bride would fight a hundred
fields."

Forth came the day-spring : forth with Cathla walked
In sleepless love Roscrana from her door.

Before the gate a grizzly giant stalked,
A rough dog gambolled on the grassy floor.
Near stepped the former, this his play gave o'er.
"Behold thy keepers," Cathla said, and smiled :
"Here Rumal, Torthil's hound, feared of the boar ;
There silent Erc, who knows each mountain wild :
Where'er inclined to roam, they'll guard my Syrian
child.

"One daughter Erc, young Oina-Morul, had,
The white-armed gladdener of his heart and eyes ;
She crossed a bridging tree, the torrent mad
Devoured her beauty, stumbling from surprise.
My Torthil sees her, down the bank he flies,
Dash through the whirls he rides the roaring wave,
Green boiling gulf and dull black pool he tries ;
Ah ! to his sight a filmy whiteness gave
The virgin, only won to a more honoured grave.

"Erc loved my boy, he fought for him, he fell ;
Healed by my care, his life from death was won
To be my dragon and to guard me well :
For you how gladly shall the same be done !
Far to the peaks of mountains does he run,
O'er lake below, o'er river, wood, and plain,
He casts his eagle eye to ken my son ;
He hies to the wild margin of the main,
To look for the white ships—for Torthil back again."

On mountain-tops when morning lights appear,
When silent dewdrops through the eve distil,
Or by the rising moon, or Hesper clear,
Or when the gusts of gloomier twilight fill
Old creaking thorn upon the stony hill,

Erc, brave and modest, was Roscrana's guide,
The shaggy Ruml was beside him still;
With them the Princess every fear defied,
As over Morven's land she loved to wander wide.

The great north-winds that on the pine-woods blow,
And heave the ocean's elemental floor,
Toss her dark locks that through them boldly go,
Sublime her spirit with their stormy roar.
Heroic land ! she loved thee more and more,
Fair, but still roughening to her young surprise ;
On heaths she met, and on the awful shore,
Majestic men who looked unto the skies,
For never slavery bowed their unpolluted eyes.

And Cathla told her of her father-land,
The deeds of Fingal, his illustrious race,
The songs of Ossian, the bards' priestly band,
The ghosts of heroes, and their dwelling-place :
They oft, when laid within the desert's space
Their sons have slept beneath the moon's wan beams
By the gray Stone of Power, before them trace
Events to come, vouchsafing them in dreams
Prefiguring gestures stern, soft monitory gleams.

But sad are they that want the funeral-song ;
Their spirits mount not to the airy hall
Of eddying winds, for ever rolled along
By weedy lakes within their misty pall.
Of signs she told, of showers of blood that fall
To gifted eyes, the Druid's shuddering grove,
The twangs of death that in the harp-strings call,
The attendant Genii on the maids they love ;
And of the Culdees told in many a rocky cove.

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And much she loved to hear Roscrana tell
Of all the wonders of the early East.
But who are they that in those caverns dwell?
Each hoary Culdee is a Christian priest.
Roscrana knew them, nor the Princess ceased
Till, more than eloquent, till, saintly bold,
Of Christ, and of her love for Him increased
In this her exile—nay, her home—she told;
Till Cathla wept glad tears, won to The Living Fold.

“Awake, my Christian child!”—by this sweet name
Cathla now named her, as for Torthil’s sake
She ever sleepless, when the morning came,
Longed for Roscrana—“My true daughter, wake!
Forth let us go and walk by bower and brake.
Alas! in tears those eyes of beauty swim:
Thee far from me thy nightly visions take,
Far to thy buried mother, far to him
Thy princely sire who sleeps in Tadmor’s aisles so dim.

“Or when thy spirit, winged with ghostly dreams,
Flies through the pale dominions of the night,
Thou meet’st thy Torthil by the midnight gleams.
Thou wak’st, and I alone am in thy sight.
Oft wilt thou sigh when comes the morrow bright;
Long wilt thou look unto the East by day
(There were the kingdoms of thy young delight),
Weeping to feel thyself too far away,
Doomed with thy father’s dust not even thy dust to lay.

“Weep not, my child! True daughter unto me!
Marvellous blessing to my end of days!
Christ send our Torthil home to us that he
May learn the truth, may learn the Eternal ways!

Then, if redeemed, shall we not be thy praise,
Immortal creature ! who hast given us up
To dwell with God, His glory to upraise ?
Perish the Druid's fable ! the true cup
Of life alone is theirs who with the Lamb shall sup."

And aye with Cathla forth that daughter went,
Grief-silent Erc and Rumal still behind ;
Their steps they to the blameless people bent,
Dwelling upon the mountains unconfined,
With peace the broken spirit to upbind,
Want from the poor and sickness to repel.
So meek their Torthil's wife, so sweetly kind,
Gray fathers bade their daughters thus excel,
The mothers called her good, the maidens loved her
well.

Too much by Swarno loved, impure of heart,
Her Torthil's foe, he tempted her with sighs ;
But true her faith, and vain the chieftain's art,
He with his friend in every enterprise,
The red Gurthullin, did a plot devise :—
Near grows a struggle with the Roman foe
(Succumb shall Morven, or shall greater rise),
The battle o'er, abroad while stragglers go,
They'll watch, they'll bear her off, and none their guilt
shall know.

Yea, chastely modest, boldly innocent,
Ne'er has she hinted Swarno's love impure ;
Hence ne'er her friends shall guess the way she went :—
" But ha ! old dragon Erc must we secure ;
Chained must he be, our scheme were else unsure :
Thus be it done,—upon the battle-eve

Him to our nearest fortalice we'll lure ;
Rumal his dog we'll slay, and him we'll leave
There fettered till we teach the damsel not to grieve."

PART THIRD.

Forth Cathla went, Roscrana by her side.
But now they heard—the air was all so still—
Trumpet and horn beyond the mountains wide.
The shouts of battle, as they climb the hill,
With hope and fear their panting bosoms fill.
Yon valley now ! Their eyes how eager bent !
O day of safety, or of endless ill !
There toils the war of peoples fiercely pent,
O'erstified, staggering, swayed, with rifts of havoc rent.

The numerous weight of her Imperial foes
O'erbears at length and crushes Morven back,
Eastward away her fainting battle goes ;
Their closer forms the o'ermastered horse unslack,
They flee, the skirting mountains wide they track ;
The abandoned chariots with unmanaged steeds
Roll mad about, and tear the harrowed rack
Of infantry that to the sheer scythe bleeds,
Wrapping the cloyed wheels round with torn limbs as
with weeds.

But lo yon Champion ! on he brings anew
The mountain men. The Romans unsustained
Are whelmed in turn. How terrible and true,
The bloody push of Morven is maintained !
Back-rattling chariots have the flight disdained ;
They roll around the outskirts of the fight,

Which onward struggles through the field regained.
But o'er them falls the thunder-cloud, like night,
Down on the battle falls, and hides it from the sight.

"Lean on me, mother, to the Culdee's rock,"
Roscrana said, "not distant by the wave,
For friendly shelter from the stormy shock.
By moon, or dawn-light, issuing from his cave,
Our noble wounded let us help to save.
Would Erc were here thee in his arms to bear !
Why has he left us thus? Not he, though brave,
Rolled back the battle: No: that Champion's air
None but a Prince could show: be sure a Prince was
there."

They reached the cell. O'erwearied with the day,
Within an inner cavern Cathla slept.
Before the embers as reclined he lay,
The bliss of slumber o'er the Culdee crept.
Alone her vigil young Roscrana kept;
That Champion still in her recurring thought,
She generous tears of admiration wept.
But now the storm was lulled or heard remote;
Forth by the crescent moon the freshening air she sought.

Rough men have seized her: through the forest's skirt
They bear her off. Casting red light before,
What tumult comes? Forth bursts, with shapes begirt,
A stately savage on the woody floor:
'Tis Erc! aloft his pinioned arms he bore,
Unheld to keep them from that galling throng;
Blazed his wild hair; his bleeding loins were sore
With hanging dogs, deep dragged by him along;
Torch-bearing serfs behind strike at the giant strong.

Still on the encumbered warrior draws his trail
Of death and danger to the Princess near;
Her arms to him, to him her face so pale
Imploring stretched, mighty for one so dear
He turns, he sweeps obstruction from his rear;
Bounding he comes; and round Gurthullin's throat,
Who chiefly holds her, wraps his chains severe;
Then wide apart and high his wrists he shot,
And hanged the uplifted wretch, who now his prey for-
got.

With starting eyeballs, and self-bitten tongue,
Erc to the ground has dashed the caitiff base.
He snatched the maid; as to his neck she clung,
A smile of daring lit his fire-scarred face.
With her he waded through the thickening chase,
Still dashing off the war that on him hung;
Then down he set her; in the embattled place
There as she stood, away from her he flung
Her circling foes, around so lion-like he sprung.

Before her now o'erwhelmed he's on his knee,
Yet fighting still; a near horn blew a blast;
Forth leapt a haughty figure, followed he
By swift retainers, round his glance he cast,
He saw Roscrana and he seized her fast.
Upsprung, with power indignantly renewed,
Old Erc, a groan from out his large heart passed
To see the maid by Swarno's grasp subdued;
Staggering he clutched the chief who bore her through
the wood.

A trumpet blows behind. They turn to see
That coming party whether friends or foes.

Them has Roscrana seen—'tis he ! 'tis he !
The chosen hero of that day she knows :
A valiant band around their leader close :
Salvation's near :—" Save ! save me, helper true !
Prince Torthil's wife am I ; this Swarno knows,
Yet here he "—" But will I not rescue you,
My own good Syrian wife ?" And forth her Torthil flew.

Quick with his blade away has Swarno shorn
His black curls gripped by Erc ; down on the ground
He set the maid behind him ; bold of scorn
And hate he met his foeman with a bound.
Steel they to steel now face each other round,
Lit by the torches ; Swarno quits him well,
But Torthil's thrusts his strength and skill confound :
That stroke shall hew him down—ha ! stumbling fell
The youth, and o'er him rose fierce Swarno's sword and
yell.

Down—ne'er he smote : Erc, sunk with wounds, has
crept,
And pulled him backward from his lifted blow,
Struggling to earth ; then on his breast he leapt,
And choked with grappling hands the throttled foe ;
Recovered Torthil guard's old Erc below ;
Dread dins the mingled conflict of the rest ;
But Swarno slain, his men soon vanquished go.
With danger past and present joy oppressed,
Roscrana, left unhurt, faints on her husband's breast.

With oaken leaves fresh dripping from the rain
Her brow he sprinkles, and she soon revives.
" Joy ! joy ! " she said, " my hero is not slain !
But where is Erc, the saviour of our lives ? "
Near borne he comes ; if dying, he derives

Solace from friends so many and so dear :
Each gallant youth to share the burden strives
Of him who trained them to the bow and spear,
They carry him like sons, the brave old man they cheer.

" Heroic creature ! To the cave away,"
Roscrana murmured, " of the Culdee John ;
There rests my Torthil's mother, since to-day
She saw the great deed of her son unknown :
Sweetly she sleeps upon the rushes strewn ;
But sweeter far shall her awaking be.
My Torthil, come ! Soft bear the old man on,
The hermit's rocky fastness soon we'll see ;
There, ever-faithful Erc, shalt thou be healed by me."

Nor in her thankful joy did she refrain,
But stooping down the old Barbarian kissed ;
His heart's best fire, unquenched by fear or pain,
Sprung to his eye, dimmed now with grateful mist ;
With clapping hands her love he mutely blessed.
" Now swiftly, gently on with him," she said ;
" Deeply though hurt, greatly though needing rest,
His frame's yet full of life ; and watchful aid
Shall heal him soon in John's mild sanctuary laid."

" Come then, my Syrian, to our mother fast,"
Her Torthil said, " and fear for me no more :
Here am I with you all your own at last,
My limbs unfettered, and my exile o'er.
Nor I dishonoured left the Italian shore :
Aurelian slain, my friend just Tacitus
Imperial sate, and loosed my bondage sore ;
Ennobling freedom has he given to us.
I came ; our battle fled, and back I won it thus.

" A grateful vassal of that Swarno slain,
Whose only daughter was to health restored,
And taught God's Word by thee, and who again
Was taught by her the heart-renewing Word,
Heard of this plot against thee by his lord,
And helped from Swarno's dungeon Erc the brave,
Then left for aye the master he abhorred,
And sought me when the fight was o'er, and gave
Hints how to mar the plot—my own dear wife to save.

" Oh how I hasted, hasting still the more,
When I was told that serfs and dogs of blood
Were after Erc, whose flight was known before
He gained the safe recesses of the wood.
Directed well, and glorying in thy good,
Nor dogs nor serfs could stay his strong career;
Though manacled, though felly thus pursued,
He sped to trace, to reach, to save thee here.
And I have found thee too : So be thou of good cheer !

" Nor fear thy holy lessons have been vain :
Blest be my dungeon's leisure to retrace
Thy words of life again and yet again,
Blent in my heart with the remembered grace
Which more than beautified thy saintly face.
Thy faith exalted thus I've won and tried."
But now they reached the Culdee's dwelling-place.
A mother's heart, a son's was satisfied.
Then turned their mingled love to Torthil's Christian
Bride.

BYRON.

[These somewhat juvenile lines were written on hearing
of the death of the Poet.]

A SUNBURST of heaven
Smote that Mountain of Wonder,
With its summit all riven
In the ranges of thunder :
The seat of the mighty,
The bards of old name ;
How glad and how bright aye,
Ensphered in their fame !
How he flashed on his track,
How he flew up the slope,
That Shape ! He looked back
From the terrible top.
One throb in his lip
Told of peril and toil ;
But the smile lighted up,
Which no passion can spoil,
Through the tear in his eye
Of indignant appeal,
That a pinion so high
Might his spirit reveal.
Up in heaven's clear portals
His summit he had ;

'Mid the highest immortals
He sat, and was glad.
Triumphant, entranced,
Rose his bosom in swell ;
And the visions advanced
To the might of his spell.
The setting sun flushed
On Old Greece, like a crown ;
And the white temples blushed
On her hills of renown.
The palm-lands were flooded
In the moons of the east ;
But the myrtles were blooded,
The vultures had feast,
From the bow they stepped down
Of the heavens, when brightest ;
From the cataract's crown,
Where its spray is the lightest ;
From the bubbles of storms,
Sun-tinted, their birth ;
Young feminine forms
All light on our earth.
But each young bosom breaking,
With love was o'er-drunk :
All clasping and shrieking
They came and they sunk.
Show the foul blots of Hell,
Let the visions increase—
But he dashed the wild spell
With a cry for Old Greece.
How started each bard
Of her ancient renown,
And each forehead was scarred
With a slave-quelling frown !

O'er their harps then each look
Bowed indignant in tears ;
And their locks fiercely shook,
The dread vintage of years.
And the tempest arose
Of old war-cries again,
Insulting her foes
At each break in the strain.
And they hailed the young Bard
In each pause of that flow,
As the battle was heard
In the valley below ;
As proudly he swelled
In his warrior form,
The red spear he held
Waving sway to the storm.
And aye his black lyre
In moments he took,
And its chord-rows of fire
With agony shook ;
Wild, thrilling, O Greece,
Thou lost star of our morn,
That the long cloud may cease,
And thy beauty return.
How wished ! since thy name
Can yet kindle such strains :
From his dark harp they came,
Like the bursting of chains.
Give the tyrants no breath !
Smite again ! Smite again !—
But a quick shriek of death
Rent the war-song in twain.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

THE lights of joy at midnight hour
Were up in ancient Babylon.
Beauty and Pleasure, Pride and Power,
Were gathered round Belshazzar's Throne.
In farther halls the dance went on,
A pomp of circling peers was nigh ;
Yet sate the King as if alone,
In boding gloom, he knew not why.

That midnight hour, forth came a Hand
And wrote along the darkened wall.
In fiery rows the letters stand,
And flaming out the King appal.
From round him, like a garment, fall
The princely heads, awed to the earth.
The Horror runs from hall to hall,
Devouring up the distant mirth.

When twice the King with manlier brow
A glance of those dread letters took,
Their bickering lightnings seemed to bow,
And court his steady scanning look.
But who their calm control might brook ?
Deep, deeper sunk the Monarch's head.

Again the lines careering shook,
And blazed impatient to be read.

A pause like death ! and far was heard
The coming sound of stately feet :
High prophet old, and mystic bard,
Have left their nightly trancèd seat :
The bold young Queen has bid them meet,
When men with fear were faint and dumb :
Low murmurs glad their coming greet ;
The star-taught Chaldee sages come.

Their figured garments strangely shone,
Far smitten by that lustrous flame ;
With measured footsteps slowly on
Through lanes of prostrate heads they came.
Emboldened by the starry name,
Thick-coming faces crowd the hall.
The Monarch owned the Magi's fame,
And pointed to the wall—the wall !

The seers of age the front resign,
The younger have not dared to speak ;
The elements had there no sign,
The wisdom of the stars was weak.
Ire touched the Monarch's pallid cheek :
" Hence !" cried he, " Prophets? Magi? Nay,
Your boasted lore's an idle freak !"
They bowed, and looked, and passed away.

" Sire !" said the Queen, " I've dared to call
Another sage, of Judah's land."
Betwixt the Sovereign and the wall
Behold the Prophet Daniel stand !

He turned when he the lines had scanned,
But silent stood, by sorrow bowed ;
Till, at the King's renewed command,
He read the words of God aloud :—

“ MENE ! Thy realm God-numbered is,
And finished to its utmost bound.
TEKEL ! Thou in the balances
Art weighed, and thou art wanting found.
PERES ! They come, the hosts renowned
Of Medes and Persians, side by side ;
(List, list afar the gathering sound !)
And they thy kingdom shall divide.”

Seemed smote with dread the marble stone,
As went the Prophet's footsteps slow ;
That flame of judgment on him shone,
And made him like an angel glow.
And there was terror, trembling, wo,
And there was wail for Babylon ;
Sunk now in dumb surprise, for lo !
Those letters from the wall are gone.

But ha ! a thousand thwarting cries
Of multitudes confused and driven,
Cry, “ From Euphrates' bed they rise,
The warriors of an angry Heaven ! ”
With coming shouts the Palace riven,
Near, nearer crowds the danger bring.
The Persian swords ! Nor space is given
To guard and save that slaughtered King.

THE SWALLOW.

THE little comer's coming, the comer o'er the sea,
The comer of the summer, all the sunny days to be.
How pleasant through the pleasant sleep thy early twitter
heard,
O Swallow by the lattice ! Glad days be thy reward !

Thine be sweet morning with the bee that's out for honey-
dew ;
And glowing be the noontide for the grasshopper and
you ;
And mellow shine, o'er day's decline, the sun to light thee
home !
What can molest thy airy nest ? sleep till the morrow
come.

The river blue that lapses through the valley hears thee
sing,
And murmurs much beneath the touch of thy light-
dipping wing.
The thunder-cloud, over us bowed, in deeper gloom is
seen,
When quick relieved it glances to thy bosom's silvery
sheen.

The silent Power that brings thee back with leading-
strings of love
To haunts where first the summer sun fell on thee from
above,
Shall bind thee more to come aye to the music of our
leaves,
For here thy young, where thou hast sprung, shall glad
thee in our eaves.

MONKWOOD.

PART FIRST.

"I've done my work : o'er belts and breadths of earth,
Regions, and parallels, and wide degrees,
I've hunted him : I've done him down to death :
And his bones whiten in the wilderness.
Come, Grip."

He said, and rose, that lean dark man,
In umbered light, within his rocky cave,
And fed his brindled hound with gobbets raw.
The cloyed dog stretched and licked his bloody jaws,
And couched anew, his muzzle to the hearth.
Fresh logs the Master flung upon the fire,
Sputtering with sap ; down then he sate, and eyed
The gulfy eddyings of the woolly smoke.

Far in the depths, rose on his shaping soul
A beauteous girl, and she came dancing on
Through the spring flowers before an antique hall,
Shaking her cloud of curls : not lightlier,
Translucent in the sunny dews of morn,
Dances the leaflet on the topmost twig.
And aye she smiled and nodded, coming near,
Nodding to him and smiling. Forward far,
As if to meet her, keen yet pleased of look,
Bending he sate.

Sudden he rose, he paced
The lurid cave; his eyes were balls of light;
But, ever as he turned him in his range,
Moister they gleamed :—" My sister, young and dear !
Gold, name it not ; nor gems, seed of the sun !
All lustrous capable stones of mystery,
All rarest things of unconceived cost,
Take them all, all ; give me my sister back,
As once she was, clear in her virgin dew !
What is she now ?" He shuddered, down he sate,
And sitting brooded on the troubled Past.

What finds he there ? His ancient house decayed,
His parents dead, his sister and himself
Grew up together, and were knit in one.
But proud from poverty, and all untrained
To equal duties, regular, mild, and safe,
Stern waxed young Monkwood : silently he spent
His hot impatience in the hunted woods.
To war he went. Betrayed, his sister fell ;
But hid her shame among the Magdalens.

Monkwood has learnt it on the eve of fight.
Stern, still, wound up, he waited for that morn.
The morning came : the battle broke : outflew
His heart, uncoiling like a spring of steel :
Far leapt he dashing down that bloody gulf,
In terrible self-relief : a thousand deaths,
Ten thousand deaths were there ; with open breast
He more than braved them all, he wooed them all,
That dreadful doer ; but they passed him by,
And all unscathed with victory he stood.
Now then for honours on his noted head !
Away, away ! farewell the pomp of war !
Hope, joy, farewell ! His jealous soul has ta'en
His sister's blot, his family honour's blight,

Full on himself. Her he will see once more,
Once, and no more ; vengeance he'll do her then
On her destroyer ; then to home farewell—
His father's home ! the wolfish solitudes
Of worlds afar, these be his fitting place,
To die at once, or eat his heart away.

In penitential depths, self-punishing,
His sister would not see him. In the Church
Of Magdalens he waited : from behind
The curtain of their sacred modesty,
Where all unseen they worshipped, there arose
The thankful song of the redeemed ones,
Swelling and thrilling : oh how Monkwood's soul
Yearned to untwist the symphony, and catch
His sister's separate voice ! If in the low
And wailing fall of the relapsing hymn
Some heart-drawn lingering voice was left behind,
How he did drink it in !—" 'Tis she, 'tis she !
My lost, my found ! I go, for I have heard,
More far to me than all the songs of time,
The uttered sorrow of thy contrite heart."

Now then for vengeance ! for his natural man
Was unsubdued : Sheer down on him who slew
His sister's peace he bore : the villain fled,
But he pursued : o'er belts and breadths of earth,
Regions, and parallels, and wide degrees,
He hunted him ; he did him down to death ;
And his bones whiten in the wilderness.

His work of vengeance o'er, all moral hope
Of life exhausted, from the ways of men
Far vanished Monkwood in the Western world,
A salvage hunter of the homeless woods,
Lord of his cave, his rifle, and his dog.

Thus brooding sits he by his midnight fire,

His spirit ranging through that troubled Past.
Balm, is there none? The poppy, flower of fate,
Turning its milky eye to the ebon Land
Of Morpheus and of Dreams, grows round his cave,
Sown by him there; oft has it eased his heart,
But aye the wo returns with added wo.
What sunken lands forlorn, what sunless depths
Of rifted rocks, and blocked obstruction jammed,
Would he not search, if haply he might find
The Waters of Forgetfulness, and drink,
And wash his soul clean white of all the Past?

Lo! now he slumbers, red with ember gleams,
Couched on a spotted skin: The dreams come on:
The hollow roaring of Eternity
Is in his soul. What end of this despair?
Hope for him yet! the Angel of the Cross,
Who circles earth, on shores and desert isles,
Along the tracks of solitary men,
To sow the seed of light, has found him out,
Has tried his stubborn heart with fear and hope:
Waking, it yields not yet; in dreams by night
'Tis giving way. So let him dream! from out
That grisly struggle of his light and dark
May grow the gladness of the perfect day.

PART SECOND.

Pride, wrath, revenge, the passions of his blood,
All dead; repentant o'er the pondered past,
And summing up the actions of the day,
Sits Father Monkwood by his evening fire.

Changed long ago, his worse than wasted youth
Filled him with sorrow; guided to the Cross,

He took its priestly training, and went forth
To give the solace which himself had found.
Strong-grained of good, as he had been of ill,
No danger daunted him, no trial stayed.
Lean with endeavour, through the Western world,
On to its outer rim, by watered plains,
And thankless sands ; the stony drought of hills,
Glared down upon ; plague-rotten swamps ; the dusk
Of swarming forests ; on by capes of ice
Horned to the floods ; snow-wildered lands, far lands
Glimmering away into the skirts of time,
Lost at the Pole ; all places, wheresoe'er
Were human hearts to suffer and to die,
There still was he with the immortal help.

Nor yet content with individual aims,
Widening of soul, with large prophetic eye,
He fixed the cradle of the coming Age
By fruitful rivers, measuring out for Man
The axe-doomed forests, and the virgin hills
Of mineral womb, the mothers yet to be
Of Iron Power, begot by Social Fire,
And cities sleeping in the shapeless stone,
All for the kingdom of the Lord of Life.

A sudden tempest tears the cracking night.
Uprising firm and slow, stately in age,
The Father from the entrance of his cave
Looks out and eyes, self-lit by its own fires,
Sucked through the mountain-gorges of the West,
The level havoc burst careering by.
Calm turning in he couches him to sleep,
Blessing the God who gives us in their change
The ordered seasons, and the day and night :—
Famine may waste, the blue spasmodic pest
May ride the tainted winds, with rifts may heave

The central fires, tilting the lifted hills,
And stony waves of movement undulate
Throughout the rock-ribbed earth ; yet fear not, Man !
Upheld for Jesus' sake, this frame of things
Shall perish not until His own Great Day.
Plead thou the Incarnate Plea, and meet that Day,
Standing up calm before the Opened Books,
Tried in the last resort of wondering worlds.

THE GOLDSPINK AND THISTLE.

OUR marly road is cracked and white :
There they be, the Spink and Thistle.
O the seed ! but O the bristle !
Hovering on the bursting head
(Rough, the more to make him tinkle ;
Rough, the more to make him twinkle)
The Goldspink hangs : the down is shed :
October, in thy windy light.

How sweet to think
You, little Spink,
Far back in the abysses deep,
Where thought conditioned fails to sweep,
Rose all a-flutter on the Central Mind !
Pleased with thy archetypal delicate tinklings,
Pleased with thy golden twinklings,
To show thee best,
For man a zest,
He hung thee on the Thistle in the wind.

N I G H T.

FROM sleepless work, and a ne'er-setting sun,
 Imagination shrinking with affright,
 Turns with fresh thankfulness to thee, O Night.
 Come up the shaded East, silent, composing One !

She comes ! A star upon her raven head,
 Moist poppies wreath her locks ; solemnities
 Of meditative light are in her eyes,
 Downcast ; and on her breast a sleeping babe is laid.

But Fancy bears her visionary train,
 All streaked, and freaked, and figured o'er with traces,
 Shimmerings, and glimmerings, shapes, uncertain faces,
 Dreams, nightmares, fays, and ghosts, all shadowy
 vague, and vain.

Down the gulf-stream of worldly tendencies
 Yon cumbered Soul is yielding more and more,
 And feebler slanting to the duteous shore ;
 Look down on him, O Night, with thy most spiritual
 eyes !

Quick with instinctive longings, from the might
 Of those just eyes, upraised he stems, right o'er,
 The sordid flood ; he stands upon the shore ;
 Handmaid of Faith and Hope, he blesses thee, O Night.

TALES OF THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

First Tale: Herodion and Azala.

PART I.

HIGH mission theirs and blest ! the Prophets share
 Jehovah's mind, Jehovah's word they bear
 From land to land, to peoples and to kings,
 Borne fear-defying on the Spirit's wings.
 Then, then, they wait not through time's dull delay ;
 Theirs the far vision of the unborn day,
 Long glories sleeping in their seed they scan,
 And taste the future joys ordained for Man.
 But bring the balance. Here the blood is spilt
 Of peopled kingdoms by o'erlording Guilt ;
 There pleasure yields but sorrows—oh, they be
 Too many for the good which earth must see.
 Hence joy is his o'erbalanced far by pain,
 Whose spirit kens the Future's coming train ;
 Unblest by hope where certainty appears :
 And knowledge saddens through protracted years.
 For he is human still. Then scorn and hate
 Too oft the prophet's warning voice await,

From those for whom the awful charge he bears
To instruct his spirit in their future cares :
So keen their hate, he scarcely can repress
Unhallowed joy at their ordained distress.
If right his heart, yet his the growing wo
Their ills increasing with their scorn to know ;
While new-commissioned threats from God on high
Still tell their worth who turn not but will die.
And thus his large heart's but prerogative
With deeper awe, with trembling still to live.

Those joys, how solemn, these majestic woes
Beseem the forms that young Azala shows,
Wrought of her needle round her father's halls :
Their life, their type, their burden she recalls,
As round she leads Herodion by the hand,
And points them there, the prophets of the land.
She, him to please, sprung of a prophet's line,
And far in battle, wrought the bold design ;
Yea more she wishes now, great-hearted maid,
Their patriot lessons on his spirit laid,
As back to war he goes : Two orphans they,
Who loved each other from their earliest day,
And now betrothed ; but both are self-denied,
And Judah must be saved ere she will be his bride.
No need to nerve his valour, if unbent
By love he slack not : this she must prevent ;
And showed the prophets, that his soul might draw
Strength from those forms august, strength from those
heads of awe
And lion faces : thus she strengthened him,
That stag-eyed daughter of Jerusalem.

Lo ! Judah's Shepherd-King : He bore with grace
A golden harp : high looked his Heavenward face,
Kindling to song divine. Behind him rose
Mount Zion's pomp of beauty and repose.

Behold ! behold, uplifted through the air,
The swift Ezekiel by his lock of hair !
Near burned the Appearance undefinedly dread,
Whose hand put forth upraised him by the head.
Within its fierce reflection cast abroad,
The Prophet's forehead like a furnace glowed.
From terror half, half from his vehement mind,
His lurid hair impetuous streamed behind.

But lo ! young Daniel in the Den, the glare
Of lions round him in the twilight there.
Seemed some, as plunged they headlong to devour,
In difficult check caught by a viewless Power ;
Bowed their curbed necks, their wrenched heads subdued,
Half turned they hung in dreadful attitude.
Others bent slept ; but still their fronts were racked
With lust of blood, their forms were still unslacked,
As if at once their hungry rage had been
Drowned in deep sleep by that vast Power unseen.
The rest, with peace upon their massive brows,
Gaze on the Prophet as in prayer he bows.

Divine of beauty more young seers they saw,
And ancients laden with prophetic awe :
Bards they as well as prophets, forth in song
Their spirits rushed against the tops of Wrong.

Herodion went. Land of such men, for thee
The great Deliverer how he longed to be !

PART II.

Slow o'er Herodion went the night and day,
As deeply wounded on his bed he lay.
Well had he fought to stop, while yet afar,
The growing triumphs of the Roman war ;
Well had he fought to stay the overthrow
Of Zion now beleaguered by the foe.

Wounded he fell ; but snatched from instant fate,
His soldiers drew him from the embattled gate,
And bore him home. Azala tends him there,
And waits and watches with unwearied care.
All this might yield a heart-appeasing thought,
To bear him calmly through his present lot ;
But his the fiery nature that could ill
Endure an arm less active than his will.
Electric blood, an energy of frame
Beyond the stuff of mortals, gave him fame
Even when a boy ; a patriot spirit bore
The bold young warrior on from shore to shore.
But Rome came on ; and Zion's now the stage
Whereon his loftier battles he must wage.
How, when her gates were widely open flung,
Forth like a panther of the wild he sprung,
Far flinging back, as on the foe he leapt,
The sable locks that o'er his shoulders swept,
Redundant from beneath a hoop of gold
Which, set with jewels, round his head was rolled !
With glory came command : though young, he led
A band of veterans, of their foes the dread,
Gray men enseamed with scars from many a brunt ;
And proud were they to have him in their front,
Clashing their arms around him, shaking each
His angry beard singed in the fiery breach.
How thus, a patriot, and in honour's quest
Fierce, could this wounded hero calmly rest ?
Stern his pangs to think that feuds within
His country tore with suicidal sin.
But hark ! Half-raised, he listened to the fight,
His soul commixed with the tumultuous night ;
Far-plunging, grappling through the battle-tide,
He gloried bearing down the Roman side ;

Till died the uproar suddenly, and shocked
His spirit to a present sense that mocked
The ideal toil, but left him, trembling yet,
From off his brow to wipe no fancied sweat.

II.

Day passed : Azala came not. Night came o'er him :
An aged nurse, Josepha, stood before him.
"What shall we do?" exclaimed she, fear-subdued :
"At noon Azala went to seek us food ;
For bread and water hardly now we find,
Though daily portions are to you assigned :
Herself scarce eats, or seems frail bread to need ;
Her own high thoughts her own dear body feed.
A sword she took : I fear the worst : for you
What quest would she not dare, so loving true ?
She's not come home : the battle raged : this hour
The Holy Hill is in the enemy's power ;
I fear she's slain ; I've sought her far and wide,
But found her not ; yet search must still be tried.
Oh, could you rise ! and quick ! for still this night
The foe's grim pause but tells the ready fight.
I fear you cannot ?" Up Herodion sprung,
A hasty mantle o'er his vest he flung ;
By fiery fever to his limbs was lent
Unnatural strength : forth with the Nurse he went.

III.

They sought Azala. All was strange repose,
Like that which waits the Earthquake's coming throes ;
For now the sword had cut its myriads down,
And famine thinned the many-peopled town,
And scarce the feeble residue could meet,
Or make be heard their voices in the street.

But lo ! the wall : Lay all around the gate
The slain unburied in their festering state ;
In these thick times of blood all reverence fled,
All hope, the living cared not for the dead.
They sought, but found her not. Loud tumults rise,
And ruddy wavings fire the midnight skies.
Home slow they went : they climb the roof, faint, slow.
The Temple burns ! O'er porch and portico
They see the sheeted conflagration go.
From sainted lattice, and from sacred door,
The crooked fires with mingled warriors pour,
Who seem the demons of the flame, as they
With waving swords burst forth their writhing way.
The red plague higher rides ; with close embrace
Now twines around the Temple's central place,
Whose golden spikes clear glitter in the light ;
Now driven away as by the winds of night,
Bellying it hangs in one wide-wafted blaze,
With ragged darting tongues that lick a thousand ways.
How dread below, with gleams, with darkness swept,
Now fiercely clear, the frenzied Battle leapt !
Shrill sprung the Nurse : she pointed to the street,
There came Azala with impetuous feet ;
Bleeding she came, yet boldly waved her brand,
Morsels of bread were in her other hand.
She saw Herodion ; with unnatural glee,
" Fear not," she cried, " I'll bring the food for thee ;
Through the strait days of siege and famine I
Will bravely feed you till this wo be by :
Come to the feast ! " But fainting on her side
She sunk, and feebly on Herodion cried.
Down rushed he, falling on her neck he lay :
United thus in death they breathed their souls away.

Second Tale : Othuriel.

CANTO I.

THE BATTLE.

FORTH comes the day : Othuriel through the land
Of Judah southward leads that Roman band,
To help Vespasian from the Jordan's mouth
Fighting to Idumea on the south.
Down the clear plain they go ; but lo ! afar
The illumined coming of a host of war,
Banners and flashing spears ! From side to side
Sharpening its crescent horns, it barred the valley wide
Upraised, high forward o'er his charger bent,
Throughout that host his eye Othuriel sent.
He turned :—" On must we, soldiers, undismayed,
Beyond those Jews Vespasian needs our aid ;
And, ere yon sun be down into the west,
In Judah's southern gardens shall we rest."

On went they : silent on his conscious steed,
That trode on fire and minced his governed speed,
Othuriel went—shocked to a sudden pause,
Swart gleams his brow, intenser breath he draws,
To see along yon front in warlike pride
His foe peculiar, dark Manasseh, ride,
His hated foe ; forth springing, down he led
His Roman foot ; it pushed its columned head
With quick short heaves against the Jews' array,
Crashing it dipped into that iron bay ;

His widening horse dash out on either side :
The kindling battle rages far and wide.

Along the mingled van with ranging speed
Manasseh rode ; leapt from his stricken steed
Othuriel, trembled through his eager frame
His heart absorbed as near his enemy came,
His still sword hung upon his eye, with might
Stamping he dared the Hebrew to the fight.
Manasseh turned and said :—" I know thee, youth ;
I wronged thee much when I impeached thy truth ;
But I will give thee"—from his charger down
He sprung—" a chance for vengeance and renown."
" My welcome this ! " Othuriel grimly spoke,
And launched his heart upon a mighty stroke ;
But warding well unhurt the Hebrew stood,
And still was proof against the blow renewed.
He smote in turn with swiftest vehemence ;
His soul Othuriel threw into defence,
Yet wounded deeply, bled. Ha ! on his neck
If fall that sheer-driven weapon without check !—
Aside he swerves, is saved ; his eye's bold gleam,
Half smiling, darkens into wrath extreme ;
His foe has stumbled—o'er the Hebrew's head
Uprising, rose his falchion ; down it sped
With might collected, unresisted main,
And drove cold darkness through his cloven brain.

Staggering Othuriel stands, he clears his eye
From dizzy motes to see his foeman die ;
Reeling he sinks : The yell is in his ears
Of trampling squadrons ; o'er his eye careers
A storm of faces, in a moment dim :
And all is blank and silent now to him.

CANTO II.

OTHURIEL'S INTERVIEW WITH JOANNA.

Othuriel wakes ; a glimmer shows him laid,
But where he knows not, on a broidered bed.
Came muffled feet ; before him stood in sight
A child of lustrous beauty ; she a light
Bore, shaded half, and half from him away
Back held, his eyes to hurt not with the ray.
"Water !" he murmured ; she a draught supplied,
Which struck cold healing through his thirsty side.
Sweet food she brought him ; bowing o'er his bed,
She salved his shoulder and his wounded head
With balsams cool and bland ; refreshed he lies,
His bosom swelling with delicious sighs.
Pleased on him gazed the girl, then slid away.
But back she came and nursed him day by day.

Othuriel, healed, to Titus northward goes ;
His way, at first perplexed, a female shows,
Veiled, sackcloth-clad ; she paused, her lifted veil
Revealed Joanna beautiful but pale ;
Northward she pointed :—"Lo !" she said, "thy way
To Zion Hill throughout the autumnal day !
On to Jerusalem straight ! there let thy hand,
Red with thy country's blood, upsnatch a brand,
Hurl the swift fire, her sainted citadel
Strike, down her arches, down her Temple fell ;
Then come before me, there declare at last
Thou well in all hast justified the past !"

"Be mine to follow to its utmost bound
Thy scornful guidance, Zion to confound !
If of my will, my power, you still demand
A pledge—Manasseh perished by this hand :

Mine was the blow"—

"But mine to mourn the deed,
For was he not a father in my need?
For was not she—ah! now his widowed wife—
More than a mother to my orphan life,
Adopted as their own? With patriot haste
He left Jerusalem where his power was placed
Highest, disdaining power, that he might dwell
In native Judah, and her enemies quell;
And I, his daughter, there was doomed to see
His manly body gashed by thee—O thee!"

"But hear me now! But I had savage cause!
Who made me what I am from what I was?
Did I not faithful fight? I loved thee: loved
By thee, how burned my heart to be approved
In greater wars, to win a name of pride,
That I might put it on my virgin bride!
Judge me, just maid! Hell and her Powers of Shame
Sent forth a scum of lies to blast my name:
They called me traitor! Ha! against me rose
Manasseh, foremost of my envious foes;
He led that host of lies: Faction and Hate
Our Council ruled, and drove me from the State:
They drove me forth! on the first mountain's brow
I knelt against them, and I vowed a vow;
To Rome I sped; I sought and found a friend
In Titus, power unto my wrath to lend;
Fired him with lust of fame; beyond my oath,
Jerusalem razed shall glorify us both."

Othuriel thus. Joanna deeply sighed,
But with heroic dignity replied:—
"Too late I heard thy wrongs. But be we just
First to thy noble enemy in the dust:
I traced the plot; thou by a rival mean
Traded, Manasseh only rash had been;

Without reserve the injustice he confessed,
Straight to the Council went, and there thy name re-
dressed.

Still grant thee harshly used—and wert thou not?—
Must then thy sacred country be forgot?
Patience magnanimous, the lofty right
To serve that country in her own despite,
O silent deeds, why do you not with these
Thy foes best vanquish, best thy spirit please?
What then? Nay, try it, tremble, and declare
Such wrath as thine but finds its triumphs air :
Walk o'er Jerusalem's waste, and where are they
Who wronged thee so upon a former day?
They (grant that waste) in whose peculiar eyes
Thou long'st the proud avenger to arise,
To stand, to point their wretchedness, to win
Their meek repentance for their former sin?
Ha ! they have fallen for Zion, well have they
Their faults redeemed ; what more can vengeance say?
This, this alone :—additional to the guilt
That thou thy people's hallowed blood hast spilt,
The empty glory's thine, to stand redressed
Before that people which is now at best
A mere abstraction, since the men are gone
Whom thou wouldst have for wrongs to thee atone."

" But thou shalt see it ; doubly shall I be
Avenged, they stricken, and thou saved by me,
Saved, honoured, loved : when I have quelled their pride,
How will I glory in my virgin bride ! "

" Manasseh fell in fight ; his wife with me,
Maromne, sought him ; there he lay by thee ;
We bore him thence : You lived, I saw and bade
You to a home be secretly conveyed ;
'Twas done ; instructed by my cautious care,
Her daughter Tamar was thy handmaid there.

So saved by us, our land you'll first o'erthrow,
 Then come with offers to insult our wo?
 No, no! why think it? Let me speak aright,
 Nor do thee wrong—oh, never will you fight
 Against your parents' God, ne'er lift unblest
 Your hand against your country sore distrest!
 Turn; help her—help us all; her hero be:
 Win loftiest vengeance—make her think of thee,
 Sue thy forgiveness, love thee; be her boast,
 Her young deliverer, in thyself a host!
 Oh, can you not? Oh, can you not, indeed?
 Now is your time, for now our day of need."

Impassioned thus, she to Othuriel raised
 Her dear young eyes; imploringly she gazed.
 But downward looking, oft his hand he passed
 Along his forehead darkly overcast.
 "'Tis o'er: to speak not of my vow," he said,
 "The trust of Titus must with truth be paid;
 And then the issue of that battle-field
 (At length by Tamar to my quest revealed)—
 My men cut off—my perfect overthrow—
 Forbids me now my purpose to forego:
 Yes—yes"—long paused he; looking round, he sees
 Joanna far retiring through the trees.
 Be it so, then! Anew with fiercer threat,
 His face against Jerusalem was set.

CANTO III.

THE ASSAULT BY NIGHT.

Still is the eve on high Jerusalem's walls,
 Save lonely sentinel heard at intervals,

As he with psalms of Judah's prosperous day,
And holy anthems, whiles his watch away.

Lo ! by the moon's uncertain struggling light,
Come dusky masses glimpsing through the night,
Of Romans drawn from their suburban rest
To gain a new wall, of the first possess.
While in the south Othuriel wounded lay,
Vespasian rose to the Imperial sway ;
And Titus well his promise can redeem
Against these walls to urge his vengeful scheme.
Othuriel joined him, healed ; ere rolled the year
They compassed Zion—they are sternly here !
They mount their engines softly ; nor they seem
To wake the City from its weary dream.
But hark ! it sleeps not : ha ! behold yon line
Of kindling fires along its ramparts shine.
Dusk figures throng the wall ; ere you can say
When, whence they rose, behind a thick array
On every tower, o'er every battlement,
With nimble gestures their bold heads present.

Loud bursts the night : o'erhead huge javelins go
From catapults, their stones balistas throw,
By stones and javelins met ; red balls expire,
And blazing arrows trail their arching fire.
More safe the Romans in the shade below,
Too well their lights above the swarthy Hebrews show ;
Yet still, as high and far the wall is swept,
New hordes upstarting to the fray have leapt.
But now the Ram in dreadful poise is hung,
Beneath its shed at first 'tis gently swung ;
Huzza ! at once its brawny men back strain
Madly, and drive it on the walls amain ;
They thunder-smitten throb. With every stroke
An answering yell from the defenders broke

Down came their crashing stones. On either flank
 The Ram is aided by a stationed rank,
 With slings and bows to clear away the foe
 Above, and guard its battering play below.
 But vain the arrows of these galling wings,
 Nor boots the dread precision of their slings;
 Though stricken thousands fall, new faces grim
 Upspringing umbered crowd the City's brim,
 Which spills its valour wild ; in either hand
 A blazing torch, in every mouth a brand,
 Down leap the Jews, fast to the penthouse cling,
 And all around their flames to fire the engine fling ;
 Till by the Roman archers placed aloof,
 Transfixed, writhing they roll from off the roof,
 And leave the Ram its last just blow to reach,
 To drive its dull head through the dusty breach.

Stern pause the Romans : sternly stands within
 That breach a wall of Hebrews chin by chin ;
 Their spears intensely ready, waiting still
 Their eyes' concentrated lightnings to fulfil,
 Blent with the darkness of immortal hate,
 As looking down unwinking they dilate.

Dread silence hangs : the moving of a head—
 A foot advanced—the twinkling of a lid
 Has burst the entrancèd pause ; the mutual front
 Has met, is swayed in one commingled brunt,
 Is locked, is cloyed, is calm in the excess
 Of might and hatred in one glutted stress.
 Slowly it loosens ; from that cramping shock
 Men's hearts can breathe, and wide the fight is broke,
 And wild and high the shouts of battle rise,
 And trumpets blow along the rending skies.

Far foremost fought Othuriel ; from the van
 Swerving he dashed, upward he widely ran

To pierce their flank, to turn and drive the foe
Down on the waste that met them from below.
Joanna stood before him! Kneeling down,
He prayed to guard her from that fated town.
But, "No," she said; "whate'er Maromne's fate,
'Tis mine, as mine has been her good estate.
Would she be saved by thee? Would she by night
Secure her safety by a stealthy flight,
Last of the Maccabees, whose duty high
She deems with straitened Judah is to die,
Where she can do no more; at least to show
A brave example, fearing not the foe?
But yet for her I dare not now refrain
Thy pity—no, thy gratitude to gain :
Say, wilt thou help us? Swear : you swear ? 'tis well.
So now my purpose let me briefly tell :—
Maromne came to Zion ; short her stay
Designed, we hoped her back from day to day.
But sickness seized her, well its work was done
Where sad bereavement had the waste begun.
I heard and came : behind the tainted air
Caused leave her daughter to a Nurse's care.
God raised her up ; her home she'll see once more,
And Tamar's presence shall her health restore.
But now you sieged us. Fearing ne'er that you
Jehovah's sainted dwelling could subdue ;
Yet, trouble-weakened, many a terror wild,
She could not hide, came o'er her for her child.
For this I've sought thee oft, I've found thee now ;
Up to Jerusalem bring her daughter thou.
Start not, you've promised ; dear your handmaid she,
And great the hazard, yet she brought must be :
For her Maromne pines. My signet here,
Be this your pledge to calm Nurse Esther's fear.

You know our home in Judah. Then, when high,
 Two nights from this, the moon is in the sky,
 Smite thou our northern gate; I waiting there
 Will glad receive the damsel from your care:
 Maromne's name beloved, our men for it
 Even thee in honoured safety would admit."
 She said and turned; he downward fought his way,
 Till coming midnight closed the doubtful fray.

CANTO IV.

OTHURIEL BRINGS TAMAR TO JERUSALEM.

Othuriel south, by Salem's eastern side,
 Went; frequent fires above a light supplied.
 Slowly he rode along the ghastly plain
 Blood-soaked, and heaped with corpses of the slain
 Cast from the walls; the wounded, too, were there,
 And thickened with their groans the burdened air.
 His snorting charger swerved as oft, beneath,
 Some trampled wretch howled forth his curse of death;
 Or wing of blood-cloyed vulture from the dead
 Rose heavy up and flapped around his head;
 Or lazy dog, whose muddy gloating eye
 Shone in the red light, with a startled cry
 Was frightened off: behind, the loathsome beast
 Came slinking back to its polluted feast.
 As burned the brighter fires, he there beheld
 The brows of infants, and the forms of eld,
 Strong men, and youths untimely cut away;
 And there the virgin in her beauty lay.

He trode a stiller and a darker space;
 Then neared a high and fiercely-lighted place,

Thick set with crosses : writhing how they glare,
Those captured Hebrews, nailed by Titus there,
With terror day and night to strike the town,
To beat the hearts of the defenders down.
Downcast his eyes, his spirit awe-subdued,
Othuriel went into that painful wood.
Shrill neighed his horse, with cries the brooding air
Was startled : " Water ! water !" was each prayer.
Slowly he passed. Heroic murmurs drew
Aloft his eye : a warrior hung in view ;
Perfect of beauty seemed his head sublime,
With power were clothed his limbs in manhood's prime,
Toward Zion fixed ; down looking by his side,
As paused the rider, thus he faintly cried :—
" Ho ! Jew or Roman, if thy heart is great,
To me the issue of this day you ll state.
On yon delightful wall, so cool and high,
The watchman paces o'er my weary eye ;
I've cried to him to tell me of the war,
But ne'er he seems to hear me from afar.
Thou son of milky woman, grant my prayer ;
Oh tell me, tell me how my brethren fare !"
Came pain's quick cords ; his curves convulsive throw
His bosom forward, like a bended bow,
Drawn ; jerking back his loins the dull tree beat ;
Thick rains the bloody sorrow from his feet.
Othuriel longed the struggling soul to cheer ;
Yet paused, his own voice daring not to hear
In such a place, by sufferings sanctified
More than hushed temples where great gods abide ;
And mute he gazed upon that lofty face
Chastised with pain and sorrow for a space.
But hark ! far blowing their defiance shrill,
The silver trumpets of the Holy Hill !

From off the countenance of the crucified
Pangs passed away, came on a gleam of pride ;
Upstretched he rose, his gathered might was racked
With noble toils till all his sinews cracked ;
His face was beautified, with joy was fired ;
And with a shout he gloriously expired.

Uprose the eastern moon : by silvered floods,
And mountains bearded with old hoary woods,
There clear the vales, here dark, Othuriel rode,
And silent vineyards now by man untrode.
Undriven away he saw the foxes young
Tear down the vintage that neglected hung ;
Such dread for Zion, hemmed with Roman lines,
Had struck the careless keepers of the vines.

Morn broke : by many a fountain fair to see
He went, and many a patriarchal tree ;
O'er the green swelling loins of summer hills,
Down the fresh valleys which the sun now fills,
There tumbling waters clean, to morning's beams
Here far uncurled the lapse of glassy streams,
With bordering trees delectable ; in haste
He trode the extended skirts of Tekoah's waste,
High Hebron on the west ; and south, between,
He rode through Judah's pastures broad and green.

Down went the day : he found at evening-tide
Young Tamar weeping by old Esther's side.
She rose, she knew him ; he his mission tells ;
Joanna's ring each lingering doubt dispels,
Pledge of his truth : they knew, they kissed it. "So,"
Exclaimed the Nurse, "thou too from me must go,
Tamar, O child ! My young lamb of the fold,
Who goest to troubles and to fears untold,
What shall I say ? The Everlasting arms
Be round about thee in the last alarms !

Yet stay, I have a sacred ring ; 'twill prove,
If no defence, a token of my love."

"Nay then," Othuriel said, "of virtue tried,
Around her neck shall be an amulet tied.
Here, since a child, I've worn it on my breast ;
Nor seldom doubtless me the charm has blest,
From ills has kept me : Surely me it laid,
When wounded, here beneath sweet Tamar's aid ;
For this it shall be hers." From off his own
Unloosed, the chain round Tamar's neck was thrown.

"Ha ! what?" cried Esther, as she saw and seized
The hanging charm, and kissed it strangely pleased ;
"It is—ah ! who art thou ? declare thy name—
Well should I know it !—'tis, it is the same !
These woven words ! My brother—ah ! more dear
For his wild lore that filled my heart with fear—
From Memphis brought it : in an old dim fane
A youthful priestess wrought the mystic chain ;
Dipped in the Nile, in a divine lagoon,
Bleached in the pale eye of the Egyptian moon,
'Twas cleared ; then was it with the sacred blood
Of the ibis spotted, and the spell was good.
Ere far he went, my brother's wizard hand
Cast round Manasseh's son the enchanted band,
Maromne's first-born son ; for gracious they
Had kept me with them since their nuptial day.
But vain their love for me, and vain that spell
To stay the mighty evil which befell ;
Lost was that son, and I, alas ! to blame.
But speak : say where, when, whence to thee it came ?"

"Woman of Judah, then, it hung around
My neck, when me a Galilean found,
A child exposed ; he reared me as his own,
But dying told me of my birth unknown.

Ah me ! what thing of horror and of dread
 Is this which now is coming on my head ?
 I see it all ! Woman, you spoke of one—
 Of—of—Manasseh ? Am I then his son ?
 Tamar ! my sister ! my sweet sister dear !
 Yet stay one moment till the whole be clear."

Before him bowed, the Nurse with eager hands
 Unbinds his sandal ; passively he stands.
 "The scar," she murmured, "if I find it here !"
 She found, she kissed it, dropping many a tear.
 Slow rising pale, "My son !" she said, "'twere meet
 That ne'er I rose, but died upon thy feet ;
 For mine the blame. I saw thy father's spear
 Fall on that infant foot—an omen drear !
 Oh, was it not ? for scarcely wert thou healed,
 When forth I took thee to the harvest field ;
 Homeward returning, in the noontide hour,
 With thee I slumbered in a leafy bower :
 I waked, but thou wert gone ; all search was vain ;
 Through long long years we saw thee ne'er again.
 Hope came at last : An aged kinsman sought
 Your father's house, by want and sickness brought ;
 Death came, your mother soothed him ; forth at last
 To her the burden of his soul he cast :—
 'Fair was thy youth, Maromne ; far above
 The maids of Judah thee my son did love,
 Mine only one ; but favour you denied ;
 He rushed to battle, and for you he died.
 Vengeance be mine ! I saw your first-born creep
 Before a bower, his Nurse was there asleep ;
 Upsnatched I bore him far, with gentle care
 I laid him down'—he died, nor told her where.
 Hope sunk anew, for still the quest was vain.
 Would, would thy sire had seen thee once again !

Come from his lofty battles, how he smiled
To take thee to him, a heroic child !
How joyed his little warrior thee to call,
His bloody lance bestriding through the hall !
Then on his knee he set thee, by thy side
Joanna, meant to be thy future bride.
But thou wert lost. Jehovah called away
His other children in their early day.
Nobly at last he fell."

"By whom? by whom?"

Othuriel cried : "Who struck him to the tomb ?
There's the right hand that did it ! bloody hand,
Which all that love for me could not withstand !
Oh, I to do it ! I to smite him dead,
Lifting my hand against that sacred head !
My foe—my father !" hoarsely thus he cried.
How shrieked his little sister terrified !
He glanced upon her in his stern distress,
And up he snatched her with a fierce caress ;
But softening kissed her forehead :—" Fear me not,
My sweet young sister ! dread though be my lot,
I'll be thy brother aye. When night is past,
I'll bear thee with me to our mother fast.
Sleep thou the while." He said, in anguish sore
Groaning, he bowed his forehead to the floor ;
There, left alone, his sorrows had their way,
As through the dark hours in the dust he lay.

II.

Uprose the morn : how shall Othuriel dare
His sister Tamar to that siege to bear ?
Shuddering he paused, he strove to make her know
The whelming danger, but she prayed to go—

With tears she pleaded ; his the hope that yet
 His Roman favour them all safe might set,
 He took, he bore her quickly by the way
 He came, and rode till the decline of day.
 His steed, aloof from the beleaguered towers
 Of Zion, fastened 'mid neglected bowers,
 He sought ripe fruits for Tamar ; by his side
 He made her sit throughout the evening-tide ;
 Close to his bosom gently drew her head,
 Till slumber came and sealed each silken lid ;
 Then bowed his cheek to hers with love so deep,
 And hid her face that she might longer sleep.

III.

High walks the midnight moon : wide opening go
 The gates of Zion to Othuriel's blow,
 Struck by his sounding spear ; Joanna there
 Forth stands to take young Tamar from his care.
 But entering with them through a stern array
 Of jealous guards he dared his onward way,
 Jealous but silent all ; till, as he passed,
 They closed behind him and the gates made fast,
 With crowding murmurs. But he heard them not,
 Far other things are in his eager thought ;
 For, homeward with Joanna as he goes,
 The tokens of his parentage he shows.
 How dares he go ? he thinks not, heeds not, he,
 All else forgot, his mother's face must see.
 His sister leads him home ; remote from all,
 He waits his mother in a silent hall.
 She came :—" My son !" He met her dear embrace,
 And long he sobbed and wept upon her face.

Down then he knelt :—" My mother ! let me go
And ask great Rome to hold thee not a foe,
To save you all, if you your son would give
One chance with gleams of happiness to live.
This be my purpose ; though, all else forgot,
To see my mother was my only thought.
But more than sorrow shall my coming be,
Oh dread my going, if I save not thee.
Swift let me go, thus save you ; then for aye
With you in native Judah will I stay."

" Behold," she said, " my late-won soldier, here
Thy father's shield, his helmet and his spear,
Who living now had been a full-orbed hame—
Start not, my son, he died but lives in fame.
His great example, for our country's sake,
Thee the fulfiller of his deeds must make.
Joanna told me something, but my ear
Alone the tokens of my son could hear.
What though, your birth unknown, for Rome you fought?
No blame was yours, yours was no traitor's thought.
Known now your birth, Rome has no claim on you ;
A Jew must do the duties of a Jew.
For this, my boy, I nursed thee on my knees,
In days gone by, beneath our native trees.
Thee forth I'll lead all gloriously ; come then,
Put on the harness of our mighty men.
Why look'st thou so ? Oh wherefore, if not free
To fight for Zion, art thou come to me ?"

" Thou wife—ah ! widow—of the man I slew !
(I say not mother, I'm no son to you ;
Though pangs take hold on me, and sore affright
To call you else) what shall I do this night ?
'Twas I that slew him. Oh but let me say
Had nature blest me in my early day,

Had I been reared upon thy sacred knee,
 (Oh let me name that name so dear to me !)
 My mother, ever mine ! then had I ne'er
 By such a deed been linked unto despair.
 I knew him not. But what shall quell the shame
 That still remains ? Apostate is my name.
 My birth unknown I plead not, up I grew
 In all the nurture of a warrior Jew :
 This land was mine ; yet darkly did I go
 And swear with Rome to lay Jerusalem low,
 Because my father in the Sanhedrim
 (My foe, I since have learned, misleading him)
 Denounced me as a traitor : from their gate
 Forth was I driven by Envy and by Hate.
 Dread was my oath ! that oath must I pursue,
 And with high hand do what I have to do.
 Yet see me kneel—oh help me to contrive
 Some surest way to save thy house alive :
 Let not my oath another parent cost ;
 Oh let me, let me not be wholly lost !"
 He said, and knelt. His mother's gone : he heard
 The turning bolt : he finds himself in ward.
 Lean men came in. They chained him. He was led
 Down to a vault : a lamp was overhead.
 There to a pillar of black gopher-wood
 Brought near, a fettered prisoner he stood.

CANTO V.

OTHURIEL A PRISONER.

Weeks o'er Othuriel went ; in silent haste
 For him each morn was bread by Tamar placed.

But now a book his sweet young sister brought,
And smiled to him as down she sate remote :
Beneath the scented lamp that lit the place,
Low o'er the opened scroll she bowed her face ;
With silver voice, with childhood's reverent awe,
She read the wonders of Jehovah's law.
Each night she did the same : he questioned ne'er
Why thus she came—he knew the loving care
Which sent her thus—but silent leant his head
Against his pillar as she nightly read,
With looks to her of love ineffable,
As down the light upon her countenance fell,
Down on the holy page ; and listening hung
To hear her softly-modulated tongue.
And oh, how swelled his bosom at the sight
Of that sweet child struck through with hunger's blight,
Yet there each night with smiles for him that he
Might fear his God, might thus her brother truly be !

II.

Day passed, nor Tamar came : at dead of night,
With famine dark, his mother stood in sight ;
Yet still her brow a grace majestic wore,
Seen by the lamp that in her hand she bore.
In slumber feigned he kept his lowly bed
Which near his pillar Tamar's love had spread,
As stealthy came she, placed him food, and threw
One glance on him, then hurriedly withdrew.
Swift gleaming back she turned ; a space she stood,
Her eyes the while seemed bent upon his food,
Fiercely they shone ; in nature's awful stress,
Down shaken fell in many a streaming tress
Her long black hair, concealing half her face ;
But back she flung it with a savage grace,

H

Forth sprung and seized the bread :—" Ah ! wo is me,"
 Upstarting cried her son, " that this should be !
 My mother ! O my mother ! thy sore want
 Is more to me than pains extravagant."
 She shrunk with startled pride, with sudden check
 Shrieking she turned, she sunk upon his neck,
 With passionate vehemence kissed him, sobbing lay
 Within his arms, and there she swooned away.
 With holy care Othuriel held her head
 Till, soon reviving, faint to him she said :—
 " My son has vanquished me ! 'tis now confest
 Beyond them all I love him far the best.
 My lost ! my dearly found ! come near my heart
 And tell me all, for thou in trouble art.
 Speak to thy mother ! well thou canst not be,
 But ill indeed ! Yea, I have ruined thee,
 Have kept thee here, have ruined thee : the foe
 The cause of thy desertion will not know,
 Will find, will slay thee. Oh, forgive ! forgive !
 My soul desired to have thee near me live :
 How could I let thee go ? Yea more, from this
 I thought that you the enlarged remorse would miss
 Of that dread vow fulfilled, and chained you thus
 From pangs to keep you, warring not on us.
 Have I done wrong, my son ? But if you deemed
 Me harsh and cruel, such I only seemed :
 I was not so to thee ; for dear thou wert,
 Thou first-born of my body and my heart,
 And dear thou art ! Old kingdoms may remove,
 But I will love thee with eternal love !
 Ha ! this is vain ; but I will go this hour,
 And fight to save you from their vengeful power."
 She said, nor looked as he implored, but threw
 Far back her hair, and glanced from out his view.

III,

Othuriel strove, but still he strove in vain,
To bow his pillar and to burst his chain.
Joanna came, and in her hand a sword :—
" 'Tis now your hour, to be from thrall restored :
This key," she said, " I've managed this to gain,
Lest aught should threat you ; it unlocks your chain.
Our Temple's burnt ! Bent on our Upper Town,
Hark ! how the Romans beat our last defences down !
High streams upon our palace to the breeze
The glorious banner of the Maccabees,
Raised by your mother ; forth she rushed :—' This night,'
She cried, ' I'll save you, for you all I'll fight.'
Haste—follow—win her back ; this danger past,
Your Roman power may shield us all at last.
This sword—your father's—take. You're free : away !"
Silent he snatched the sword, and sprung unto the fray.

CANTO VI.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF MAROMNE AND JOANNA.

Loud tumults rend the night ; the loudest drew
Othuriel northward : thither fast he flew ;
Yet pausing oft as came behind him cries,
And waftings met him from the kindled skies.
There oft he saw in some sequestered nook
A famished mortal eat with hurried look,
The very joy of whose possession foiled
Itself with jealous fears to be despoiled ;
He ne'er unslacking o'er his chance supply
The gaunt and strict-drawn wolf within his eye.

Here blackened forms, a visionary throng,
 With noiseless feet came flittingly along;
 In eager silence glaring some retreat,
 Some feebly chatter in the lonely street.
 But lo, the wall embattled! High and far
 Maromne's spear led on the Hebrew war.
 Othuriel saw, and swift to her he sprung,
 Nor vainly; back a foe from her he flung,
 Who leapt to seize her; he enraged his spear
 Struck out; Maromne with a shriek of fear
 Before her son her shielding bosom cast,
 And far that weapon through her body passed.
 Othuriel raised her; back the Jews were driven,
 The Romans knew him now, and space to him was given
 To gaze in tearless silence on her face,
 As blanching death came over it apace;
 Yet there her love, his sorrow to beguile,
 Kept up a pale and melancholy smile:—
 "My very dear young son! I see thee yet,
 And loath my eyes from thee in death to set!
 In happier days, and earlier to me won,
 Would I had known thee, O my son! my son!"
 She paused exhausted; aye, as aye grew dim
 Her eye, she cleared it still to look on him.
 Convulsive shudders passed throughout her frame,
 And o'er her face an awful sorrow came:—
 "Joanna! Tamar!" cried she: "Night of fear!
 Away, my son! we must not both be here.
 Lord, let me up! lift up my painful side,
 That in the rock my children I may hide,
 Till Thy great indignation be o'erpast,
 Descending on us to consume us fast!
 Lord God of Abraham! shall mean kingdoms buy
 My lovely children? help! I must not die!"

But she is dead. Othuriel closed her eyes ;
And lifting carried through tumultuous cries
Her body homeward, dipping still his feet
In blood clear glittering on the flaming street.
Captives he passed, young men and virgin bands,
Far to be driven to strange and cruel lands,
A huddled throng : scarce glutted Strength and Rage
Could thrust their cloyed blades thro' encumbering Age.
When foes he met, his dead one down he laid,
O'er her he stood, fiercely he waved his blade ;
Aloof they passed, he raised his sacred load,
And soon again Maromne's chambers trode.
There on a bed he laid her ; swift he traced
His mother's rooms deserted, silent, waste ;
He calls on Tamar, on Joanna calls,
But hears alone the echo of the halls.
He sought that vault where, many a night and day,
His own dear mother's prisoner he lay ;
There by the lamp still burning, lo ! 'tis she,
His own Joanna kneeling on her knee,
But pale as death ; her left hand back entwined
In Tamar's hair, who shrinking sits behind,
Her right upstays her leaning on a spear :
Ah ! blood is welling from that side so dear,
Down o'er her snowy vesture far it streams.
But still her eye with angry beauty gleams,
Fixed on that slaughtered Roman whom her lance
Pierced doubtless first to stay his base advance.
Slow went Othuriel near ; the virgin raised
Her eyes, and strangely, keenly, on him gazed
One moment ; shrieking in her gladness, she
Sprung, stretched her arms in death with him to be,
Fell, ere he met her, o'er that soldier's head ;
He rushed, he raised his young Joanna—dead.

A grief so stern as his no tears supplied,
 He bore and laid her by his mother's side ;
 Tamar went with him, her he held a space
 Upraised to look upon their mother's face :—
 "You know her, Tamar? She to us has been
 A dearer mother than wide earth has seen,
 But she is gone from us ; yet better far
 That she is dead in these sore days of war.
 Weep not, my sister lamb, of thee I'll take
 Great care, and love thee greatly for her sake :
 I am thy brother, come with me !" He led
 The stumbling child, and from the chamber sped ;
 Nor, by the very greatness of the ill
 Awed, much she wept, but clung unto him still.
 The roof he sought ; high streaming in the breeze,
 He saw the banner of the Maccabees ;
 Down quick he tore its lettered flag ; he sought,
 By Tamar led, a sepulchre remote
 Behind the house ; away its stone he rolled,
 And spread within that standard's silken fold ;
 Then forth he brought his dead ones from that room,
 And side by side he laid them in the tomb ;
 And round their holy heads, and round their feet,
 With gentlest care he wrapped the embroidered sheet ;
 Rolled back the stone to guard their long long rest ;
 Upsnatched his sister, to his swelling breast
 Strained ; kissed her forehead, and her face bedewed
 With silent tears still checked but still renewed ;
 Then strove in vain his sobbings to repress,
 That she might fear not from his great distress :
 The while he bore her in his arms away,
 And came to Titus ere the rising day.

CANTO VII.

THE END OF OTHURIEL.

"No, princely Titus ! On my head amain
Just Heaven exhaust the armoury of pain !"
Othuriel said, as down a valley they
From wasted Zion far pursued their way,
Leading their steeds ; young Tamar went between ;
Far on before a Roman host was seen.
"So dread my sin, 'tis nought that I repent
My country's fall ; mine must be punishment :
'Tis now begun. But let me not forget
For all thy gracious thoughts my mighty debt.
Kings hate their traitor instruments, and this
The more when they have helped them not amiss ;
But not so thou : a nobler rule is thine,
Still work for me, and safety to design,
And hope. Though stern must be my future lot,
My heart shall keep the mitigating thought,
That through my rash dark treason thou hast seen
A better nature, and my friend hast been.
I thank thee, generous Cæsar, but my vow
Is wholly finished, and I leave thee now.
Whither to roam, where resting must be met
My plague of memory, I have fixed not yet.
Would I were in the deserts, to be borne
Fleet o'er a hundred hill-tops through the morn,
To drive the tempest of the chase, to slay
The wild boar only at the fall of day,
When sleep should catch me dropping from my toil,
And dreams alone have time my peace to spoil !
Or give me war—oh give me boundless strife ;
Let me be swift and silent all my life !

But ha ! this damsel—for her tender sake,
 My worthless life in keeping I must take.
 For her I've lingered till your host you drew
 From ruined Salem, to be safe with you,
 My convoy hither. But for me you stay
 Too long conversing thus, your troops are on away.
 Farewell, heroic man ! yon hills afar,
 And these the plains of Judah free from war,
 Will yield me safety now," Othuriel said.
 But see ! outbursting from a neighbouring shade
 Of trees, six mounted Jews ; their bearing shows
 They know and will not spare their country's foes.
 Stern, swift they came. Sprung with a startled bound
 Othuriel's charger, wheeling round and round.
 Upsnatching Tamar, to his readier steed
 The Cæsar leapt, and pushed him to his speed.
 Othuriel follows ; dashing as he went,
 A gleaming javelin by a Jew was sent ;
 Whizzing it overtakes him in its track,
 Ha ! deep it quivers buried in his back.
 Caught with dread check, round writhed Othuriel struck,
 With clutching hand that weapon forth to pluck ;
 Yet kept his seat, and, urging his career,
 Pursued yon Hebrew with his levelled spear,
 Who followed Titus ; well his speed maintained,
 He neared him fast as on the Prince he gained,
 Ground his clenched teeth, his lance transfixing thrust,
 And hurled the Jew down headlong to the dust.
 Down too he reeled ; yet rising, staggering, he
 Leant on his spear that Tamar he might see.
 Back gallops Titus in his friendly fear.
 But hark, those other horsemen coming near !
 " They come, they come ! why, Roman, dare you stay ?"
 Othuriel cried, " Save her ! away, away !

Hold but thy hand aloft, a princely sign
To keep my Tamar as if she were thine,
Thy sister or thy daughter ; and till death,
Let no man draw her from her father's faith.
Thanks, lifted hand ! high token ! Now then, flee !
Ride ! ere I die, her safety let me see !
The God of Jacob help you, and help her !
I see you, sister, would I with you were !
But I am hurt, I cannot go with you ;
Yet long I'll look"—Away his Tamar flew :
And sore the pangs that his young bosom rent,
And much he waved his hand, as on she went ;
As still he heard her name him o'er and o'er,
And cry for him, and shriekingly implore
That he would come to her ; as turned and bent
To him, to him, o'er Titus' neck she leant,
Yearning for him, her arms outstretched in air
In blent confusion with her floating hair ;
As died her voice, her look from him for aye ;
As fast and far he saw her borne away.
But soon the parting grief that him subdued,
Was swallowed up by anxious fear renewed ;
For lo ! those Hebrews still pursuit maintain,
And chance may give them what speed cannot gain.
Heavy with death he staggered ; aye the more
He leant upon the spear which scarcely him upbore ;
And still from thickening mists his eye he cleared
To see his sister saved ; still faint to Titus cheered.
Joy ! joy ! he sees the Cæsar far before
His following foes ; they pause, the chase is o'er !
Tamar is saved ! Othuriel, satisfied,
Sprung, clapped his hands, and falling calmly died.

FANCY.

THUNDER-PALLS through gorges trailing,
 In their skirts the raven sailing;
 Slanting shafts of showery light
 Strike, wet and warm, the woodlands bright,—
 The melting woodlands greenly bright.
 List ! list the music Summer loves :
 All her woodlands moan with doves.

Purple spirts, and golden sheaves !

But ah October's faded eves !
 Trooping down the barren shore,
 The lapwings wheel their veering flight
 The sandy ferry o'er and o'er,
 Now they're black, and now they're white ;
 Hoarser brawl the wind-curled rills ;
 From out yon gap in the far hills
 The hail-blast drifting white and slow
 (How the fir-wood glooms below !)
 Seems to come on, but thin and rare
 Disperses as it hangs in air.

November clouds on every moor,
 All the hills they drench and steep,
 Dun sodden hills of blackened sheep ;

Torrents leaping, downward sweeping,
All the rotten woodlands dripping,
Mercy house the wandering poor !

O'er curdled floods, and hills of snow
Moon-glazed, the North's keen nostrils blow.

Trouble of wild illumining
Dashed on the moorland lone !
Flashes the falcon's wing
Up from the Runic Stone.

Bless thee, sweet April corn, exhaled to sight,
A dewy dust of thin green light.

In my winter corner musing,
Fancy thus her finger using,
Cunning finger, dipt in glooms,
Dews of light, and coloured blooms,
Gives me, round her pictured hall,
Touches of the seasons all.
Tricksy Fancy, well she knows
What clouds to every scene she owes,
And shapes and tints them as she wills ;
Rose-skirted on the mountains hoary,
Torn to shreds of hurrying rack,
Ranged in the north and battlemented black,
White flock of zenith, or with stormy glory
Tumbling tumultuous o'er the western hills.

Ruddier deep the embers glowing,
Rarer things is Fancy showing :
Sun-spilt in earth's embowelled night,
Drops of distilled and filtered light,

Compact to lucid stone, to shine
 On emblematic breasts divine ;
 Green floating twilights, Shapes, the caves
 Of eldest Mystery 'neath the waves ;
 Upward, onward, limitless,
 Foaming with worlds, heaven's blue abyss :
 And Fancy still my minister,
 I with all the worlds confer.

Death sat on the Pale Horse and cried :—
 " Hail, sunny South !
 Saws in his jaws, snap goes my crocodile's mouth.
 Horned and burnished, asp and adder
 Hiss and rear as on they glide—
 Ha ! the fang has made me gladder.
 What a roar ! what a bound ! how that lion of ours
 Gripshis fear-foundered quarry, rends, craunches, devours !
 Sweep on ! Be doom !
 My leal Simoom
 Far lurid whirling o'er Sahara sweeps :
 It whirls, and whelms
 The drifted realms.
 From swamp to swamp my Fever creeps.
 Whoop ! club, swung out from ambushed craft,
 Smite, surety sure to poisoned shaft.
 Mother of slaves,
 Give white men graves.
 My blessing on the sunny South !"
 Mocking he pointed, as the maiden slept :
 Look ! look ! her love—" Save ! save !" she shrieked,
 woke, wept.
 Heart, passionate heart, dark as thy day or bright,
 Fancy rules thy dreaming night.

Mirth for Man her berry crushes ;
Love her cestus, wove of blushes,
Froth of the sea, quick bloom of fire,
Tremors, and sighs, and sweet desire,
Wears all for Man : How soft they stand
In witching grace from Fancy's hand !

Spirits of moral calm and storm,
All the ideal tribes, so shy
And complex to the Sage's eye,
'Tis Fancy gives them living form.
She shapes the elemental powers,
Sylphs, and ounches, and elves of flowers ;
Faded ghosts of old renown,
By tops and turrets tumbling down ;
Eyes of dragons spitting flame ;
Hags of the night, and all the race
That hate and fear the Sign of Grace,
Vague phantoms drear without a name.

The horn of War she rides afar,
And curls its tip of tragic ire.
The turtle Peace, she will not cease
Her breathing through the belch of fire.

List, oh list the sweet-lipped Sages.
I hear the Song of world-wide compass sung.
I hear the Prophet's tongue
Come sounding down the ages :
Kings and their scattered levies fly
The accusing angel of his eye.

Spiritual in the depth of time,
Vivid rise the heads sublime :

Large of front, with luminous eyes,
The lords of thought and purpose rise ;
The men-compellers, chief and sage,
Who shaped the world from age to age.
" Put thy shoes from off thy feet,
Reverent stand, and reverent greet,"
Fancy whispers, " dare to scan
The awful head of God in Man."
And to the wondering inner eye,
The Man of Sorrows passes by.

It boils, it breaks, the abysmal mist :
Up, curdling Future ! Modes, degrees,
Horns of power, and heads of crest,
Fancy, more than seeing, sees.

The orphan ail, the orphan wail,
So weak in yonder dwelling drear,
The Heavens assail ; within the Vail,
They grapple God to bow and hear :
Such grief below, such grace above,
Fancy dares the Throne of Love.

Above, below, each form and show,
To Memory, Reason, Faith, assigned,
'Tis, Fancy, thine to recombine,
And multiply the life of Mind.

TO THE MEMORY OF A CITY PASTOR.

HIS soul was truth severe : The shafts of day
Strike through the vague delusions of the night ;
So, arrowy keen was his assault of light,
The "Idols of the Den," to pierce them, pierce and slay.

No Fatherhood is in the Pantheist's God,—
Eyeless, impersonal thing : From out the wild
Diffusion strange our living Father smiled,
As from the Pastor's lips our plea of Sonship glowed.

"Go ! coward sneerer at thy parent's vow,
Who held thee up ; at least be scornful bold :
Dark cite thy Pagan Club ; drops deadly cold
From rue and nightshade take, wash, disbaptise thy
brow !"

Yet oh how tolerant of the modest doubt,
Peace to the soul, peace to the struggling soul,
He loved to breathe ! Clear slips of gladness stole
Down through the rents of gloom, and cast the phantoms
out.

"Fear thou no more ! God never made in whim
An organ but for use : our yearning hope
Of Heaven hereafter, like our hand, has scope
To grasp the thing which is ; that Heaven is thus no
dream.

" Shall He who made us with a wish and trust
And power to know our Maker more and more,
Be faithless to Himself who in our core
Still keeps the hope He put, and cheat us all with dust ?

" How terrible, should God extinguish Man,
Were all our race to lift one gathered cry,—
' Father, hast Thou deceived us ! ' God Most High,
So challenged, were not God : Doubt not His Deathless
Plan.

" 'Tis Life, my friend ! For this God's blood was paid.
Strange Word ! Yet stranger that a soul like thee,
God-stamped, should die, than that Incarnate He
Should suit Himself to dwell with sons so nobly made."

Come down, thou purple Pride ! He storms thee down,
That Son of Thunder. More, through Him above,
Whose shield was patience, and whose spear was love,
His is a war to lift meek Virtue to her crown.

Years, grief and years, drink up the lustrous eye ;
The sunny curls are thin, white, sapless hairs :
Peace ! aged one, to thee Christ's servant bears
Pledge of the surer prime—life with thy Lord on high.

Down the blind alley, up the festering stair,
Wan creatures, ground by hunger from their den
(Hunger, lean mainspring of the world of men),
Took from him help and hope back to their nightly lair.

Daughters of Sin ; remnants of men, their faces
Ploughed and cross-ploughed by Pain, gnarled, weather-
stained
With grim old cruelties, and blood-engrained,—
Half rose to meet his eye down in their dying places.

All pests, all plagues he faced. The midnight cry
 Of dwellings wrapt in webs of roaring flame
 Roused him to help. Poor son of scaffold shame,
 Out on the rueful verge, he taught thee how to die,

Children of Night, oh his immortal strife,
 With tears and blood to wash you white of beauty,
 Divinely white ! For power to do his duty
 More did he pray to God than for eternal life.

" Be fire, be love, in one ! From Sinai Wrath
 Bowed down and Mercy in the manger kissed :
 The Tongues of Fire shall melt the Dragon's crest "—
 Cheered he the Mission on—" Love, it is life from death.

" Walled round with bastions of obstruction strange,
 Won is the North ; such war the Gospel wages.
 Sunk, simmering lies in the sultry sloth of ages
 The absorbed and feeble South : it starts to the great
 change.

" The Grace that dawned in the prophetic East
 Is day to the far West—our Heavenly day !
 Our thanks be zeal to help it round away
 To where (love thus to train) the primal light has ceased.

" Work, Man, with God. Down through the dark of time
 Comes the long shudder of ancestral Pain :
 That Curse prolific, work it out amain
 By light and love : make Earth and Heaven one blessed
 clime."

How bursts from heart to heart, great soul and true,
 Thy passionate thought ; bold, as the terrors loom,
 To dash with sunny tumult all the gloom,
 Yet high of solemn charge ! Friend of mankind, adieu !

A SUMMER DAY.

Morning.

GRAY brindled dawn comes up before the sun.
 There's health, there's moral healing in the hour
 So naked clear, so dewy, dewy cool.

O curse of sleeplessness! Haggard and pale,
 The tyrant Nero, see him from his bed
 Wandering about, haunting the long dim halls,
 And silent stairs, at midnight, startled oft
 At his own footsteps, like a guilty thing,
 Sharp turning round aghast. The palace sleeps,
 And all the city sleeps, all save its lord.
 Then looks he to the windows of the east,
 Wearily watching for the morning light,
 Which comes not at his will. Down on his bed
 He flings himself again. His eyeballs ache;
 His temples throb; his pillow's hot and hard;
 And through his dried brain thoughts and feelings drift
 Tumultuous, unrestrained, carrying his soul
 On the high fever's surge. The imperial world
 For one short dewy hour of healing sleep!
 Worlds cannot buy the blessing. Up he reels,
 And staggers forth. Slow-coming day at length

Has found him thus. Its busy forms of life,
Its turms, its senators, its gorgeous guests,
Bowling in homage from barbaric isles,
To him are phantoms : Through its ghastly light
Wildered he lives. To feel and be assured
He yet has hold on being, with the drugs
Of monstrous pleasures, cruelty and lust,
He drugs his spirits ; ever longing still
For the soft hour of eve, if sleep may come
After another day has worn him out.
But images of black, bed-fellows strange,
Lie down with him ; drawing his curtain back,
Unearthly shapes, and unimagined faces,
Look in upon him, near down on his eyes,
Nearer and nearer still, till they are forced
To wink beneath the infliction, like a weight
Of actual pressure, solid, heavy, felt.
But winking hard, a thousand coloured motes
Begin to dance confused, and central stars,
And spots of light, welling and widening out
In rings concentric, peopling all the blind
Black vacancy before his burning balls.
But soon they change to leering antic shapes,
And dread-suggesting fiends. Dim, far away,
Long dripping corpses, swaying in the waves,
Slowly cast up, arise ; gashed, gory throats,
And headless trunks of men, are nearer seen,
And every form of tragic butchery.—
The myriad victims of his power abused
By sea and land. To give their hideousness
Due light, a ceiling of clear molten fire,
Figured with sprawling imps, begins to glow
Hot overhead, casting a brazen light
Down on the murdered crew. All bent on him,

Near, nearer still, they swarm, they crowd, they press ;
And round and round, and through and through the rout,
The naked Pleasures, knit with Demons, dance.

But up from innocent sleep, how fresh to meet
The glistening morn, over the smoking lawn
Spangled, by briery balks, and brambled lanes,
Where blows the dog-rose, and the honeysuckle
Hangs o'er the heavy hedge its trailing sheaf
Of stems and leaves, tendrils and clasping rings,
Cold dews, and bugle blooms, and honey smells,
And wild bees swinging as they murmur there.
The speckled thrush, startled from off the thorn,
Shakes down the crystal drops. With spurring haste,
The rabbit scuds across the grassy path ;
Pauses a moment, with its form and ears
Arrect to listen ; then, with glimpse of white,
Springs through the hedge into the ferny brake.
Or taste the freshness of the pastoral hills
On such a morn : Light scarfs of thinning mist
In graceful lingerings round their shoulders hang ;
New-washed and white, the sheep go nibbling up
The high green slopes ; a hundred gurgling rills,
Sparkling with foam-bells, to your very heart
Send their delicious coolness ; hark ! again,
The cuckoo somewhere in the sunny skirts
Of yonder patch of the old natural woods ;
Sudden with iron croak, clear o'er the gray
Summit, o'erhanging you, with levelled flight,
The raven shoots into the deep blue air.

Lo ! in the confluence of the mountain glens,
The small gray ruin of an ancient kirk ;
Our first Reformed, so faithful reverence tells.

There stands it, and will stand, till Time's slow tooth
Nibble it all away ; for it is fenced
With awe, and ghostly fears, the abuse of awe
In simple minds : Strange judgments, so they say,
Have fallen on those who once or twice have dared
To lay their hands upon its holy stones
For secular uses, and remove the bell.
Such faith has Scotland in her Burning Bush !
Bush of the wilderness ! see how the flames
Bicker and burn around it ; but the Spirit
Blows gracious by, and the dear little Bush,
The desert Bush, in every freshened leaf
Uncurled, unsinged in every flowery bud,
Fragrant with Heavenly dews, and dropping balsams
Good for the hurt soul's healing, waves and rustles,
Even in the very heart of the red burning,
In livelier green and fairer blossoming.

Earth sends her soft warm incense up to Heaven ;
The birds their matins sing. Joining the hymn,
The tremulous voice of psalms from human lips
Is heard in the free air. You wonder where,
And who the worshippers. Behold them now,
Low seated by the burn ; an old gray man,
His head uncovered, and the Book of Life
Spread on his knee, and by his side his spouse,
Aged and lowly, beggars by their garb,
With frail cracked voices, yet with hearts attuned
To the immortal harmonies of faith,
And hope, and love, in the green wilderness
Praising the Lord their God—a touching sight !
High in the Heavenly House not made with hands,
The archangels sing, angels, and saints in white,
Striking their golden harps before the Throne ;

But, in the pauses of the symphony,
A voice comes up from earth, the simple psalm
Of those old beggars, heard by the Ear of God
With more acceptance than hosannahs pealed
Through all the hosts of blissful jubilee.

Her nest is here : But ah ! the cunning thing,
See where our White-throat, like the partridge, feigns
A broken wing, thick fluttering o'er the ground,
And tumbling oft, to draw you from her brood
Within the bush. Now that's a lie, my birdie !
Your wing's not broken ; but we'll grant you this,—
The lie's a white one, white as your own throat.
Yet how should He who is the Truth itself,
And prompts all instinct, plant in you deceit,
And make you act it, even to save your young?
The whole creation groans for Man, for sin,
And death its consequence : We're changed to you
In our relations, birdie ; as a part
Of that primeval ill, we rob your nest.
To meet this change perhaps, high Heaven itself
Permitting moral wrong, instinctive guile
Has thus been lent to your instinctive love :
And your deceit is our reflected sin.
The more we wonder at this curious warp
From truth, the more we see the o'erruling law
Of natural love in all things, which will be
A fraud in instinct, rather than a flaw
In care parental. Oh how gracious good,
That all the generations, as they rise,
Of living things, are not sustained by one
Great abstract fiat of Benevolence ;
But by a thousand separate forms of love,
All tremblingly alive ! The human heart,

With all its conduits, and its channel-pipes,
Warm, flowing, full, quiveringly keen and strong
In all its tendrils and its bloody threads ;
The wallowing, belching monsters of the deep,
Down to the filmiest people of the leaf,
Are all God's nurses, and draw out the breast,
Or brood for Him. Oh what a system thus
Of active love, of every shape and kind,
Has been created, from the Heart of Heaven
Extended, multiplied, personified
In living forms throughout the Universe !

In life's first glee, and first untutored grace,
With raven tresses, and with glancing eyes,
How beautiful those children, lustrous dark,
Pulling the kingcups in the flowery meadow !
Born of an Indian mother : She by night,
An orphan damsel on her native hills,
Looked down the Khyber Pass, with pity touched
For the brave strangers who lay slain in heaps,
Low in that fatal fold and pen of death.
Sorrow had taught her mercy : Forth she went
With simple cordials from her lonely cot,
If she might help to save some wounded foe.
By cavern went she, and tall ice-glazed rock,
Casting its spectral shadow on the snow,
Beneath the hard blue moon. Save her own feet
Crushing the starry spangles of the frost,
Sound there was none on all the silent hills ;
And silence filled the valley of the dead.
Down went the maid aslant. A cliff's recess
Gave forth a living form. A wounded youth,
One unit relic of that thick battue,
Escaping death, and mastering his deep hurt,

From out the bloody Pass had climbed thus far
The mountain-side, and rested there a while.
The virgin near, up rose he heavily,
Staggered into the light, and stood before her,
Bowling for help. She gave him sweet spiced milk,
And led him to her home, and hid him there
Months, till pursuit was o'er, and he was healed
And from her mountains he could safely go.
But grateful Walter loved the Affghan girl,
And would not go without her : They had taught
Each other language : Will she go with him
To the Isles of the West, and be his wife ?
Nor less she loved the fair-haired islander,
And softly answered, Yes. And she is now
His Christian wife, wondering and loving much
In this mild land, honoured and loved by all ;
With such a grace of glad humility
She does her duties. And, to crown her joy
Of holy wedded life, her God has given her
Those beauteous children, with the laughing voices,
Pulling the kingcups in the flowery meadow.

Our walk is o'er. But let us see our bees,
Before we turn into our ivied porch.
The little honey-folk, how wise are they !
Their polity, their industry, their work,
The help they take from man, and what they give
Of fragrant nectar, sea-green, clear, and sweet,
Invest them almost with the dignity
Of human neighbourhood, without the intrusion.
Coming and going, what a hum and stir !
The dewy morn they love, the sunny day,
Softened with showery drops, liquoring the flowers
In every vein and eye. But when the heavens

Grow cloudy, and the quick-engendered blasts
Darken and whiten as they skiff along
The mountain-tops, till all the nearer air,
Seized with the gloom, is turbid, dense, and cold,
Back from their far-off foraging the bees,
In myriads, saddened into small black motes,
Strike through the troubled air, sharp past your head,
And almost hitting you, their lines of flight
Converging, thickening as they draw near home ;
So much they fear the storms, so much they love
The safety of their straw-built citadels.

Noon.

At times a bird slides through the glossy air,
O'er the enamelled woodlands ; but no chirp
Of song is heard : all's dumb and panting heat.
How waste and idle are yon river sands,
Far-stretching white ! The stream is almost shrunk
Down to the green gleet of its slippery stones ;
And in it stand the cows, switching their tails,
With circling drops, and ruminating slow.
A hermit glutton on a sodded root,
Fish-gorged, his head and bill sunk to his breast,
The lean blue heron stands, and there will stand
Motionless all the long dull afternoon.

But the old woods are near, with grateful glooms,
Dells, silent grottoes, and cold sunken wells ;
There rest on mossy seats, and be refreshed :
Thankful you toil not, at this blazing hour,
Beneath the Dog-star in some sandy lane
Of the strait sea-coast town, pent closely in

With walls of fiery brick, their tops stuck o'er
With broken pointed glass, and danders hot
Fencing their feet, with sparse ears of wild barley
Parched, dun, and dead amongst them ; o'er your head
The smoke of potteries, and the foundry-vent
Sending its quivering exhalation up—
Heat more than smoke ; to aggravate the whole,
The sweltering, smothering, suffocating whole,
The oppressive sense upon your heart of man's
Worst dwellings round you—smells of stinking fish ;
Torn dingy shirts, half washed, flea-spotted still,
Hung out on bending strings at broken windows ;
Hunger, and fear, and pale disordered faces,
Lies, drunken strife, strokes, cries, and new-coined oaths,
All hot and rough from the red mint of Hell.

Lo ! with her screwed tail cocked aloft in air,
The cottar's cow comes scampering clumsily.
Her, sorely cupped and leeched, the clegs have stung
From her propriety ; and hoisting high
Her standard of distress, this way she comes
Cantering un wieldily, her heavy udder,
Dropping out milk, swinging from side to side.
Pathetic sight ! so long have we been used
To see the solemn tenor of her life,
From calfhood to her present reverend age
Of wrinkled front, scored horns, and hollow back,—
Tenor unbroken, save when once or twice
A pool of frothy blood before the smithy
Has made her snuff, snort, paw, and toss her head,
Wheel round and round, and slaving bellow mad :
That blood the cadger's horse, seized with the bots,
When he on cobwebbed clover, raw and cold,
Had supped, gave spouting, spinning from his neck,

Beneath the blacksmith's mallet and his fleam.
Is this the cow, at home so patient o'er
The cool sobriety of cabbage-leaves,
Hoarse cropped for her at morn, when the night-drops
Lie like big diamonds in the freshened stock,—
Drops broken, running, scattered, but again
Conglobed like quicksilver, until they fall
Shaken to earth? Is this the milky mother,
That long has given to thankful squeezing hands,
With such an air of steady usefulness,
The children's streaming food—twelve pints a-day ;
And with her butter, and her cheese, and cans
Of white-green whey, has bought the grocery goods,
Snuff and tobacco? O the affecting sight !
Help, help, ye shades, the venerable brute !
But gradually subsiding to a trot,
She takes the river for her cooling stand.
Ah, Crummie ! you have stolen this scampering march
Upon the little cowherd. Far are heard
The opening roarings of his wondering fear,
Loading the noontide air. Three other friends
Had he to feed, besides the family cow.
Twin cushats young, the yellow hair now sparse
In their thick gathering plumage, nestling lie
Within his bonnet ; they can snap, and strike
With the raised wing ; grown vigorous thus, they need
A larger dinner of provided peas.
Nor less his hawk, shrill-screaming as it shakes
Its wings for food, must have the knotted worms
From moist cold beds below the unwholesome stone,
Which never has been raised—if he be quick
To raise it, and can seize them ere they slink
Into their holes, or, when half in, can draw them,
With a long, steady, gentle, equal pull,

Tenacious though they be, and tender stretched
Till every rib seems ready to give way,
Unbroken out in 'all their slippery length.
These now he wandered seeking, for the ground
Was parched, and they the surface all had left :
And many a stone he raised, but nothing saw,
Save insect eggs, and shells of beetles' wings,
Slaters, cocoons, and yellow centipedes.
Thus was he drawn away. When he came back,
His cow was gone. Dismayed, he looked all round.
At last he saw, far-off on the horizon,
Her hoisted tail. He seized his birds and ran,
Following the tail, and as he ran he roared.
Lo ! yonder comes he, roaring, red-hot-faced.

The world is flooded with the dazzling day.
We take the woods. Couched in their checkered skirts,
Below an elm we lie. A sylvan stream
Is sleeping by us in a cold still pool,
Within whose glassy depth the little fishes
Hang, as in crystal air. Freckled with gleams,
'Neath yonder hazelly bank which roofs it o'er
With roots and moss, it slides and slips away.
Here a rayed spot of light, intensely clear,
Strikes our eye through the leaves ; a sunbeam there
Comes slanting in between the mossy trunks
Of the green trees, and misty shimmering falls
With a long slope down on the glossy ferns :
Light filmy flies athwart it brightening shoot,
Or dance and hover in the motty ray.

We love the umbrageous Elm. Its well-crimped leaf,
Serrated, fresh, and rough as a cow's tongue,
Is healthy, natural, and cooling, far

Beyond the famous bay, glazed, glittering hard,
As liquored o'er with some metallic wash.
Thus pleased, laid back, up through the elm we look :
What life the little Creeper of the Tree
To leafdom lends ! See how the antic bird,
Her bosom to the bark, goes round away
Behind the trunk, but quaintly reappears
Through a rough cleft above, with busy bill
Picking her lunch ; and now among the leaves
Our birdie goes, bright glimmering in the green
And yellow light that fills the tender tree.

Low o'er the burnie bends the drooping Birch.
Fair tree ! though tattered be its vest of white,
No fairer twinkles in the dewy glade.
Sweet is its scented breath, the wild deer loves
To snuff and browse about the budding spray.
Wandering the woods, the truant schoolboy spies
The thick excrescence of its matted sprigs,
And hopes the cushat's nest : soft steals he near.
Ah, what a cheat ! But if the tree be old,
He finds the fungous corkwood in its clefts,
And with his knife he fashions him a ball.
Next peels he off a bit of bark, and splits
With his thumb-nail the many-coated rind
To the last outer thinness ; then he holds
The silky shivering film between his lips,
And pipes and whistles, mimicking the thrush.
Nor less the Beauty of our natural woods
Is useful too. What time the housewife's pinn
(O cheerless change that stopped the birring wheel !)
Whirled glimmering round before the evening fire,
'Twas birchen aye. And when our tough-heeled shoes
Have stood the tear and wear of stony hills

Beyond our hope, we bless the birchen pegs.
In Norway o'er the foam, their crackling fires
Are fed with bark of birch, and there they thatch
Their simple houses with its pliant twigs.
At home, the virtues of our civic besoms
Confess the birch. The Master of the School
Is now "abroad : " oh may he never miss,
Wander where'er he will, the birchen glen ;
But cut the immemorial ferula,
To lay in pickle for rebellious imps,
And whip to worth the boyhood of the land !

The Queen can make a Duke, but cannot make
One of the forest's old Aristocrats.
Behold yon Oak ! what glory in his bole,
His boughs, his branches, his broad frondent head !
The ancient Nobleman ! Not She who rules
The kingdoms, many-isled, on which the sun
Never goes down, with all the investiture
Of garters, coronets, scutcheons, swords, and stars,
Could make him there at once. Patrician ! Nay,
King of the Woods, his independent realm !
Whate'er his titled name, there let him stand,
Fit emblem of our British Constitution,
Full constituted in the rooted Past,
With powers, and forces, and accommodations,
The growth of ages, not an act or work !
Beyond this emblem of old dignity,
And far beyond the associated thought
Of "Hearts of Oak," that mightiest incarnation
Of human power that earth has ever seen—
As when we launched our Nelson, and he went
Thundering around the world, driving the foe,
With all their banded hosts, from hemisphere

To hemisphere, before him by the terror
Of his tremendous name, but overtook,
And thunder-smote them down, swept from the seas—
Beyond all this, the reverend Oak takes back
The heart to elder days of holy awe.
Such oaks are they, the hoariest of their race,
Round Lochwood Tower, the Johnstone's ancient seat.
Bowed down with very age, and rough all o'er
With scurfy moss, and parasitic hair,
They look as if no lively little bird
Durst hop upon their spirit-awing heads.
But solemn visions swarm on every bough,
Of Druid doings in the dusk of old.

When lours the thunder-cloud, and all the trees
Stand black and still, with what a trump profound
The wild bee wanders by! But here he is,
Hoarse murmuring in the foxglove's weighed-down bell.
How summer-glad! but when the frost-edged days
Of later autumn come, they'll find him hang
In torpid stupor on the purple knot.
Man robs him too. The boys have found his door,
And delve him out: he issues: ragweed they
Ply, fearing him, but yet on honey bent,
And beat him down, and follow to his bike.
They seize the yellower and the cleaner comb,
But drop it quick, when squeezing it they find
Nought there but milky maggots; then they pick
And suck the darker bits, soiled of the earth,
Wild-bitter-flavoured in their luscious strength.
The mower in the meadow ruffles up
The foggie's nest, a ball of soft dry fog:
With what an acrid, angry, pent-up buzz
Swarming it stirs! but when the yellow bees

Are all dislodged, and spin their airy rings
Away, away, the bright clean honey's his.

Ah ! there's Miss Kitty Wren, with her cocked tail,
Cocked like a cooper's thumb. Miss Kitty goes
In 'neath the bank, and then comes out again
By some queer hole. Thus all the day she plies
Her quest from hedge to bank, scarce ever seen
Flying above your head in open air.
Unsmitten by the heat where now she is,
She strikes into her song : how bold of birr
It starts, and to the last articulate tip
Tingles with life ! Thus all the year she sings,
Except in frost, the spunky little lass.
On mossy stump of thorn her curious nest
Is often built, a twig drawn over it,
To bind it firm ; but more she loves the roof
Of sylvan cave o'erarched, where the green twilight
Glimmers with golden light, and foxgloves stand,
Tall, purple-faced, her goodly Beef-eaters,
To guard and dignify her entrance-gate.
But how, Miss Wren, in your small crowded house
(Your pardon ! we must call you Mrs now)
Do you contrive to feed your dozen young,
And give them all fair play ? Come, tell us, too,
What means the Bachelor's Nest ? Bold goes her pipe,
And Kit the clever cocks her saucier tail.

But here comes Robin. In our boyish days,
We thought him Kitty's husband. He, like her,
Sings all the year ; but she is not his wife.
Look how the knowing fellow turns the head
This way and that, peeping from out the leaves
With curious art, and still comes hopping near.

Strong in his individual character,
His full black eye, short neck, and waistcoat red,
His pipe mellifluous, and pugnacious pride,
Darting to strike intruders from his beat,
His love of man is still his leading type.
The starved hedge-sparrow haunts the moistened sink,
On gurdy winter days, the bitter wind
Ruffling her back, showing the bluer down
Beneath her feathers freckled brown above,
But ne'er she ventures nearer where man dwells ;
With sidelong look, bold Robin takes our floor.
And when, as now, we rest us in the depth
Of leafy woods, he's with us in a trice.
Such is the genius of red-breasted Robin.

What makes the Owl abroad at such an hour ?
'Tis not canonical for one whose walk
And conversation is on Wisdom's shoulder
Staid, in the meditations of the night.
Look at him ! Sunny motes are in his eyes ;
And yet he makes his dazed and doubtful way
Out of the wood, full into glaring noon.
Worse wildered there, what can he do but wheel
In blind, short, aimless, awkward circlings round,
Lest he should bump his head against a tree ?
Puck, to your spiriting here ! yonder's a sheaf
Of sunbeams piercing through the thinner leaves ;
Pluck thee the sharpest of the cluster, get
Behind Sir Oracle, and prick him back
Home to his ivied cell, admonished thence
To budge not, till the little mouse of night
Creeps from her hole, and fissles through the grass.

Along the shingly shallows of the burn,

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The smallest bird that walks, and does not hop,
How fast yon Wagtail runs ; its little feet
Quick as a mouse's ! Thus its shaking tail
Is kept in even balance, poised and straight.
With hopping movements 'twould not harmonise,
But wagging inconveniently more,
Mar way when off the wing : How well contrived
Such congruous motions of the feet and tail !
Aloft in air, each chirrup keeping time
With each successive undulation long,
The wagtail flies, a pleasant summer bird.

With all the thick short rowing of her wings,
The Magpie makes slow way. But her glib tongue
Goes chattering fast enough : in yonder fir,
The summer solstice cannot keep her mute.
Ominous pie ! the peasant sees it tear
With mad extravagant bill his cottage thatch,
And fears for death within ; the schoolboy, forth
On morning errand, counts with eager awe
The sidelong pies high hopping o'er his road,
And learns the fortunes of the coming time.

Sweet lore was yours, O Bewick, with that eye
So keen, yet quiet, for the Beautiful,
And for the Droll—that eye so loving large !
The fame of Wilson in the wilderness
Shall still be green, while the white Dove of Day
Flies through the heavens, chased by the Raven, Night.
How joys the enthusiast Audubon to catch
And fix the creatures of the solitudes
In pictured play, the play of tameless life,
Wanton and freakish free, their sallies tart,
Their secret gestures, and the wild escapes

From out their eyes ; watching how Nature works
Her fine frugalities of means, even there
Where all is lavish freedom, finer still,
The compensations of her processes,
Throughout their whole economy of life.
Sweet study ! Oh for one long summer day
With Audubon in the far Western woods !

We leave the shade, and take the open fields,
Winding our way by immemorial paths,
So soft and green, the poor man's privilege :
May jealous freedom ever keep them free !
Such is the sultry dimness of the day,
The eye sees nothing clear. But now it rests
On yonder sable patch—ah, yes ! a band
Of mourners gathered in the churchyard ground.
The black solemnity in such a day
Of light and life, oh how unnatural !
But who goes dust to dust ? A matron ripe
In years and grace at once for death and Heaven.
Wed, widowed, and a mother, in one year,
She dwelt in peace, love-nourishing her child.
Mild and sedate, upgrew the old-fashioned boy ;
And went to church with her, a little man
In garb and gravity : you would have smiled
To see him coming in. She lifted him
Up to his seat beside her, drew him near,
And took his hand in hers. There as he sate,
Oft looked she down to see if he was sleeping ;
And drowsy half, half in the languor soft
Of innocent trust and aimless piety,
The child looked up into his mother's face.
And she looked down into his eyes, and saw
The neighbouring window in their pupil balls,

With all its panes, reflected small but clear ;
And gave his hand soft pressure with her hand,
Still shifting, trying still to be more soft.
God took him from her. Holy still of heart,
She dwelt alone, and changed not. Trouble ne'er
To neighbours gave she, but she helped them all.
And when she died, her grave-clothes, there they were,
Made by her own preparing heart and hand,
And neatly folded in an antique chest :
Not even a pin was wanting, where, to dress
Her body with due care, a pin should be ;
And every pin was stuck in its own place.
Nor was all this from any hard mistrust
Of human love, for she the charities
Took with glad heart ; but from a strength of mind
Which stood equipped in every point for death,
And loving order, loved it to the end.

The mourners all are gone : How lonely still
The churchyard now ! Here in their simple graves
The generations of the hamlet sleep ;
All grassy simple, save that, here and there,
Love-planted flowerets deck the lowly sod.
Fond love, we scorn thee not : to bring the bud
Of living beauty from the ashes dear,
Be still thine artless emblematic war
Against the dull dishonours of the grave.
Bloom then, ye little flowers, and sweetly smell ;
Draw up the heart's dust in your flushing hues
And odorous breath, and give it to the bee,
And give it to the air, circling to go
From life to life, through all that living flux
Of interchange which makes this wondrous world.
Go where it will, the dear dust is not lost ;

Found it will be in its own place and form,
On that great day, the Resurrection Day.

• Evening.

Those shouts proclaim the village school is out.
This way and that, the children break in groups ;
Some by the sunny stile, and meadow path,
Slow sauntering homeward ; others to the burn
Bounding, beneath the stones, and roots, and banks,
With stealthy hand to catch the spotted trout,
Or stab the eel, or slip their noose of hair
Over the bearded loach, and jerk him out.
Here on his donkey, slow as any snail
At morn from the far farm, but, homeward now,
Willing and fast, an urchin blithe and bold
Comes scampering on : his face is to the tail
In fun grotesque ; stooping, with both his hands
He holds the hairy rump ; his kicking feet
Go walloping ; his empty flask of tin,
Which bore his noon of milk, quiver of life,
And not of death, high-bounding on his back,
Rattles the while. With many a whoop behind,
Scouring the dusty road with their bare feet,
In wicked glee, a squad of fellow-imps
Come on with thistles and with nettle-wands,
Pursuingly, intent to goad and vex
The long-eared cuddy : He, the cuddy, lays
His long ears back upon his neck, his head
Lowered the while, and out behind him flings
High his indignant heels, at once to keep
That hurly-burly of tormentors off,
And rid his back of that insulting rider.

Unconscious boyhood ! Oh the peril near
Of luring Pleasures ! In the evening shade,
Drowsy reclining, in my dream I saw
A comely youth, with wanton flowing curls,
Chase down the sunlit vale a glittering flight
Of wingèd creatures, some like birds, and some
Like butterflies, and moths of marvellous size
And beauty, purple-ruffed, and spotted rich
With velvet tippets, and their wings like flame.
Onward they drew him to a coming cloud,
With skirts of vapoury gold, but steaming dense
And dark behind, close gathering from the ground ;
And on and in he went, in heedless chase.
Straightway those skirts curled inward, and became
Part of the gloom : Compacted, solid, black,
It has him in, and it will keep him there.
The clouds stood still a space, as if to give
Time for the acting of some doom within,
Ominous, silent, grim. It moved again,
Tumultuous stirred, and broke in seams and flaws,
And gave me glimpses of its inner womb :
Outdarting forkèd tongues, and brazen fins,
Blue web-winged vampire-bats, and harpy faces,
And dragon crests, and vulture heads obscene,
I there beheld : Fierce were their levelled looks,
As if inflicted on some victim. Who
That victim was I saw not. But are these
The painted Pleasures which that youth pursued
Adown the vale ? How cruel changed ! But what
And where is he ? Is he their victim there ?
Heavy the cloud went passing by. From out
Its further end I saw that young man come,
Worn and dejected ; specks and spots of dirt
Were on his face, and round his sunken eyes ;

Hollow his cheeks, lean were his bony brows ;
And lank and clammy were the locks that once
Played curling round his neck : The Passions there
Have done their work on him. With trembling limbs,
And stumbling as he went, he sate him down,
With folded arms, upon a sombre hill,
Apart from men, and from his father's house,
That wept for him ; and, sitting there, he looked
With heavy-laden eyes down on the ground.
But the night fell, and hid him from my view.

Desolate he who with his means abridged,
Yet proud as poor, dwells in a narrow flank
Of his ancestral house, gloomily vast
Beyond his need ! The chambers of disuse
Seem haunted all : mysterious laden airs
Move the dim tapestries drearily ; and Shapes
Spectral at hollow midnight beckoning glide
Down the far corridors, and faint away.
Such yonder mansion in the darksome wood ;
And such its master—useless to his kind,
Souring out life on his unsocial bile.

Here dwells a Sage of Song. Far went he down
On the great waters ; lands whose dust is fire,
The hills of leopards, and the caves of wrong,
He feared them not : he saw the ways of men :
Wide grew his heart. Serenely here he dwells.
For him all Power puts on its rarest power,
All Grace its inner grace. The gleaming north,
Where Winter forges in his cloudy shop
His bolts of ice and casts his monster bergs,
Hangs in his chambered eye ; how glad for him,
Spring fills with dewy light her lily cup !

Beyond its uses vast, the swelling sea
With liquid lustre rounds the shining globe :
For him does Beauty thus consummate Use.
Night's hoary shapes for him, and baleful blots ;
Doom ; and the Skeleton Death, at whose lean back
Lie the decayed nations of the grave ;
Sweet pity tremulous through love's glistening tear,
Promise, and dayspring, and immortal youth !
" The coral worms how small ; yet, each to each,
How mighty they to lay the founded moles
And stretching ribs of goodly isles to be,
The seats of man ! I too am but a worm ;
Yet if I turn my own peculiar heart
To one harmonious truth, helping therewith
That vast formation up to Heaven whereon
Virtue shall keep her everlasting seat,
Not all in vain has been my measured life."
Thus holds the Sage communion with his soul.

In yonder sheltered nook of nibbled sward,
Beside the wood, a gipsy band are camped ;
And there they'll sleep the summer night away.
By stealthy holes, their ragged tawny brood
Creep through the hedges, in their pilfering quest
Of sticks and pales, to make their evening fire.
Untutored things, scarce brought beneath the laws
And meek provisions of this ancient State !
Yet, is it wise, with wealth and power like hers,
To let so many of her sons grow up
In untaught darkness and consecutive vice ?
True, we are jealous free, and hate constraint,
And every cognisance o'er private life ;
Yet, not to name a higher principle,
'Twere but an institute of wise police,

That every child, neglected of its own,
State-claimed should be, State-seized, and taught, and
trained

To social duty and to Christian life.
Our liberties have limits manifold ;
So let the National Will, which makes restraint
Part of its freedom, oft the soundest part,
Power-arm the State to do the large design.
This work achieved at home, with what a right
To hope the blessing should we then go forth,
Pushing into the dark of Heathen worlds
The crystal frontiers of the invading Light,
The Gospel Light ! The glad submitting Earth
Would cry, Behold, their own land is a land
Of perfect living light—how beautiful
Upon the mountains are their blessed feet !

Through yonder meadow comes the milkmaid's song,
Clear, but not blithe, a melancholy chaunt,
With dying falls monotonous ; for youth
Affects the dark and sad : her ditty tells
Of captive lorn, or broken-hearted maid,
Left of her lover, but in dream thrice dreamt
Warned of his fate, when, with his fellow-crew
Of ghastly sailors on benighted seas,
He clings to some black, wet, and slippery rock,
Soon to be washed away ; what time their ship,
Driven on the whirlpool-wheel, is sucked below,
And ground upon the millstones of the sea.
The song has ceased. Up the dim elmy lane
The damsel comes. But at its leafy mouth
The one dear lad has watched her entering in,
And with her now comes softly side by side.
But oft he plucks a leaf from off the hedge,

For lack of words, in bashful love sincere ;
Till, in his innocent freedom bolder grown,
He crops a dewy gowan from the path,
And greatly daring flings it at her cheek.
Close o'er the pair, along the green arcade,
Now hid, now seen against the evening sky,
The wavering, circling, sudden-wheeling bat
Plays little Cupid, blind enough for this,
And fitly fickle in his flights to be
The very Boy-god's self. Where'er may lie
The power of arrows with the golden tips,
That silent lad is smit, nor less that girl
Is cleft of heart : be this the token true :—
Next Sabbath morn, when o'er the pasture hills
Barefoot she comes to Church, with Bible wrapped,
In clean white napkin, and the sprig of mint
And southernwood laid duly in the leaves,
And down she sits beside the burn to wash
Her feet, and don her stockings and her shoes,
Before she come unto the House of Prayer,
With all her reverence of the Day, she'll cast
(Forgive the simple thing !) her eye askance
Into the mirror of the glassy pool,
And give her ringlets the last taking touch,
For him who flung the gowan at her cheek
In that soft twilight of the elmy lane.

Pensive the setting day, whether, as now,
Cloudless it fades away, or far is seen,
In long and level parallels of light,
Purple and liquid yellow, barred with clouds,
Far in the twilight West, seen through some deep
Embrowned grove of venerable trees,
Whose pillared stems, apart, but regular,

Stand off against the sky : in such a grove,
At such an hour, permitted eyes might see
Angels, majestic Shapes, walking the earth,
Holding mild converse for the good of man.

Day melts into the West, another flake
Of sweet blue Time into the Eternal Past.

THE CAPTIVE OF FEZ.

CANTO I.

THE PRISON.

O'ER golden Fez the summer sun is shining,
 But not for Julian, there in durance pining.
 Why thus in durance he, to whom life's spring
 Was promised joy, descended of a King?
 Upgrew his stately youth; up with it grew
 His soul enlarged, heroic, gentle, true,
 And won the honour and the love of all
 Within his father's Court of Portugal.
 Forth then rejoicing in his early might
 He rode, against the sultry hosts to fight
 Of Fez, led on by black Zemberbo, far
 Flashing abroad his thunder-lights of war.
 O'er desert hills, and many cloudy lands,
 Battling he rode, and o'er a world of sands,
 The bold young Prince! He galled the Afric horde;
 He won the garland for his virgin sword;
 A world-wide name he'll win. Ah fatal hour!
 A Captive now he's in Zemberbo's power:
 Sent to the Fezzan Court, with special care
 Zemberbo bade be light his bondage there;
 His honour pledged that thence he should not flee,
 He in the Palace otherwise was free.

But Geraldine he saw. To Abusade,
The King of Fez, was born the beauteous maid ;
Born of an English mother, who had been
Raised from a slave to be the Fezzan Queen.
Her, though a playful child, that mother well
Trained up like England's women to excel,
To hold the holy Jesus far above
The Arab Prophet, and his Cross to love.
That mother died. 'Twas laid on Geraldine
At once her sportive girlhood to resign
For a grave weight of cares, to be a mother
To her young sisters and her infant brother,
And make them Christians : for the King had vowed
Unto his dying wife that this should be allowed.
Nor by the Fezzan Court unfelt had been,
The English manners of its honoured Queen,
That jealous law to soften which inthralls
Untrusted woman in sequestered halls.
Hence Julian saw the Princess, unproved :
He saw and loved, and told her that he loved ;
And, heart to heart, he won her gentle sigh
In thrall inglorious that his youth should lie.

But came a sterner thrall. To darkness now,
And dungeon fetters he is doomed to bow.
So wills Zenone—wild peculiar maid !
Her princely sire was slain by Abusade,
Who vengeful wrapped in one devouring roar
Of fire his palace on the Italian shore.
Perished all else within ; from out the flame
Alone, unscathed, the child Zenone came.
Saved by the King, he bore her o'er the sea
To Fez, his own adopted child to be ;
And chastely reared within his Court was she.
But other passions in her heart she nursed,
Of hate and vengeance, yet on him to burst,

Great was her spirit ; though retired she dwelt,
Wide o'er the Fezzan realm her power was felt,
From daring counsels : for it gratified
Her soul capacious, and her native pride,
To rule ; but more because it gave her power
Of wider wrath against her vengeful hour.
Thus walked she queenlike ; for the Monarch still,
Soothed by her harp, indulged her passionate will,
And gave her sway, the more because he found
With large success her counsels had been crowned.
She met, she loved young Julian ; chaste yet bold,
Flushing in tears, her love for him she told,
Deliverance promised, waived her mighty pride,
And sought to flee with him, and sought to be his bride.
How from the Captive's just refusal burned
The Syren's heart, to equal anger turned !
To more than anger ; for the youth, she knew,
Cold to herself, to Geraldine was true !
Chains for him then ! And he was chained and thrown
Down to a dungeon ; nor the thing was known
Save by the King, who yielded his assent
To this, Zenone's ready argument :—
“ What though Zemberbo speeds not to retake
Shore-guarding Ceuta, still have we a stake ;
His honoured Captive shall in ward remain,
Menaced with death, till we our town regain :
His father holds, and back to us will give
The place, how gladly, that his son may live.
Meanwhile our Court his durance must not learn,
So shall we shun to rouse Zemberbo stern.”
To enlarge her vengeance in the Captive's ill,
Or still the purpose of her love fulfil,
That he to her, whom he had dared to spurn,
All humbly yet might be constrained to turn,

The instructed jailer, with a well-assumed
Reluctance, told him that his bonds were doomed
By Geraldine, to calm the jealous pride
Of a young native prince, who sought her for his bride.

Oh is it so? He fought against his chains,
Till worn, and sick, and sunk in fiery pains,
'Twas left him but, with nature's last endeavour,
To wade and struggle through delirious fever,
Where strength is worst disease, where manhood high
Is only fiercer than the mummery
Of palsied age, its laughter and lament,
Is but a dotage more magnificent.
No hand was there to wipe his forehead damp,
No care, no love, to trim life's fainting lamp ;
Yet, helped by nature, from his bed of pain
He rose, but feebly, to his floor again.
From mood to mood revulsive, feeling less,
And brooding more, he sunk to listlessness,
Deeming all glory gone, all hope a lie,
All life itself one dull infirmity :
And Heaven was dark, and to his spirit's tone
Even God seemed weary on His boundless throne.

II.

Thus Julian pines in durance. Now has run
The yearly circuit since he saw the sun ;
And, from his softening jailer, this is all
He yet has won to mitigate his thrall,
That, nightly passing from his low mid place,
One hour his steps should have a freer space
In a wide room with grated bars, that so
Heaven's breath on his young head might freshly blow.
'Twas now his privileged hour ; with weary pain
He paced the chamber, dragging still his chain.

But hark ! near coming through the stilly night
A mandolin : how sweet its touches light !
He bent to hear it : well that lay he knew,
Since oft he breathed it forth, slow sauntering through
The Palace gardens, in the twilight dim,
Till Geraldine had learned it thus from him ;
Since twice, as paused his song, entranced he stood
To hear it softly back to him renewed
From her high lattice : well he knew that lay ;
No time shall blot it from his heart away !

It ceased ; he started ; in the moonlight clear,
Outside his window, stands a lady near.
'Tis Geraldine ! softly he named her name,
And to his words this gentle answer came :—
"Thou good young Prince, oh is it thou ? The grace
Of life they shame, who keep thee in this place
Forlorn and fettered thus. Say, Captive one,
Can aught to succour thee by me be done ?"

"Why, I might wish these idle days were by ;
Might wish," he said, "again to see the sky
Wide o'er the world : The seasons in their range,
That come and go with sweet dividual change,
My home of early days, my friends of fame,
The camp, the field, the glory of a name,
Still haunt my heart. Yet joy, all hope, all power
Are undesired ; yea death be mine this hour,
If thou hast doomed me thus ! They tell me, maid,
By thee, O thee, in fetters here I'm laid.
My soul ! can it be so ? Shall man believe
She comes in mockery thus to see me grieve ?"

"No, no !" she answered. "But my heart, not clear
From other blame, deserves thy thought severe.
For I did wrong thee, deeming, till to-day,
That thou hadst broke thy faith, and fled away.

They told me so, but oh, it ne'er was so ;
Unstained thy honour, spotless as the snow.
And now, young Knight, need I declare that I
Ne'er doomed, ne'er wished thee thus abased to lie ?
Oh no, indeed ! To-day, my faithful slave
First heard of this : the news to me he gave :
Thy prison found, 'twas mine that lay to try,
To probe these depths of dull captivity ;
To let thee know thou wert not all forgot,
Nor all uncared for in thy lonely lot ;
To make thee hope that friends were planning for thee,
And yet again to freedom might restore thee."

"This, this is to be free ; and I am free !"

The Captive murmured : "ne'er the hard decree
That chained me thus, dear virgin, came from thee !
Yon Moon in heaven how many hearts have blest,
As on she journeys meekly to the west !
She lights the white ships o'er untravelled seas,
She soothes the little birds upon the trees,
And cheers the creatures of the solitudes,
And leads the lovers through the glimmering woods,
And gives to weary hearts unworldly calm,
When slumber comes not with its wonted balm :
But not yon Moon in heaven, without a stain,
To watchful sailors o'er the trackless main,
To little birds, to desert beasts of night,
To lovers hasting by her glimpsing light,
To hearts oppressed, is, as thou art to me,
Maid with the dovelike eyes, whose grace of love I
see !"

"Farewell, young Sir ! From out this living grave,"
The Princess whispered, "thee I'll try to save.
Farewell, and fear not !" Geraldine is gone ;
Slowly the Captive turns, and feels he is alone.

CANTO II.

THE PROVOKED REBEL.

What though the failing arm of Abusade
No longer wields his battle-leading blade ;
Yet still he glories in his wars, that still
To flashing victory turn his kingly will.
On Afric's north sea-border, and the coast
Of fronting Europe, gleams his dusky host,
Led by Zemberbo who still quells the bands
Of Portugal, and menaces her lands.
Thus in his palace of illumined halls
The Monarch sits, and for Zenone calls,
To see her flush beside her harp, and hear
Her intermingled song, so soft and clear,
To win his soul throughout the pleasing coil
Of varied thought without the mental toil ;
For this the double joy that music gives,
To soothe the soul whilst it intensely lives.
She comes, but sits remote : See the young witch
Lean to her harp ! O creature rare and rich !
Dark as the Night, but beautiful as Day,
Beautiful, lustrous dark ! Wrath and Dismay
Stormed in the chords, and wailed : to fury rose
The tragic vengeance, thick with stabbing blows.
The King looked up ; severe, concentrated,
Seemed coming near the creature's angry head.
Surprised he rose. But from Zemberbo came
A slave, prompt audience for that Chief to claim.
Zenone heard, and from the chamber went ;
For well she guessed Zemberbo's discontent,
And would not bar it in its wrathful vent.

'Twas she who brought him thus. For when she knew
That Geraldine was striving to undo
Her Captive's fetters, and to this had pressed
The Monarch, not unmoved by the request,
Alarmed she started : what must she do now ?
The King may Julian's freedom thus allow ;
May still within his Palace let him live ;
Nay, Geraldine to be his wife may give,
From Portugal by friendship to regain
What arms and threats of death have sought in vain :
For still the King, so well Zenone still
The matter managed with deceptive skill,
Thought Julian's sire was tried, but would not yield
Shore-ruling Ceuta up, his son from death to shield :
And thus Zenone by her arts had gained,
That still the Captive in her power remained.
But what must she do now ? In secret sent,
Her hasty message to Zemberbo went
Of Julian's thrall : and much the King it blamed,
That doubly daring he Zemberbo shamed ;
First, that from dungeon chains he did not spare
That Captive, heedless of Zemberbo's prayer
To treat him kindly ; next that private terms
He tried for Ceuta, and Zemberbo's arms
Doubting insulted thus. Zenone well
Knew the fierce heart on which her message fell :
He'll come, he'll brave his King, away he'll go
At once a rebel, and at once a foe ;
The Captive with him. Geraldine shall ne'er
Where she has failed, the wedding garment wear ;
No more shall see her Knight. Zenone's hour
Of vengeance comes, as comes Zemberbo's power,
Rebellious, stern, triumphant. Well shall she
Second his arms : Eased shall her bosom be,

Eased of that King ; and all his house she'll whelm,
And all his black and unbaptised realm.

II.

Entered Zemberbo, as the Monarch lent,
From hid reluctance, or from free consent,
Permission ; wrath was on his forehead high,
Glancing like copper ; from his kindled eye
Came out fierce question like a bickering sword ;
And thus he stayed not for his Sovereign's word :—
" Prince Julian lies immured ?—they tell me so !
I did not send him to endure this wo ;
Sire, I did send him, in my battles ta'en,
In Fez an honoured Captive to remain,
Declared my kinsman, bone and blood of mine,
And far-descended of the Prophet's line.
Yet, kin forgot, be chains, be pains for him,
Let dropping dungeons rot him, limb by limb ;
So thou, high King of Fez, wilt deign to show
My wish not scorned, but him a traitor foe."

" Sir Chieftain," said the Monarch, " deign to bow
The dark defiance of that servant brow !
Then haply we'll remind thee of thy boast
To win that town which rules our northern coast,
Held by the foe. Beyond thy promised date,
That Captive Prince was kept in princely state.
Thy boast was vain ; it pleased us then to try
If Ceuta him from chains and death might buy.
Not bought, he dies : 'twere well he died this hour,
Just to remind thee of our sovereign power."

He said, and clapped his hands ; a giant band
Of negroes come, and round Zemberbo stand.

Yet dauntless stood the Chief, and eyed his King,
Then proudly turned and scanned the sable ring :
Towering he rose as o'er the warlike brunt ;
And darker grew his high embattled front ;
And flashed his eye, as brings the steely dint
Red seeds of fire from the deformed flint.

"Me menace not," hoarse whispered he, "proud
King;

A thousand hearts are ready forth to spring,
To turn my death to vengeance : ere I came
From out my camp that Captive boy to claim
(For in the distant battle I had heard
Myself despised in him thus doomed to ward),
In my great Captains' hearts I breathed my fear,
And won their oath to avenge me injured here,
To avenge that Captive too. But, Sire, no more
Of this ; still let me battle on the shore ;
With loyal war I've warred to take that town,
And, trust me, I shall yet restore it to thy Crown.
Around it, flashing down the coast, of all
Bravest, careers the King of Portugal,
With vigour like the eagle's youth renewed,
Has baffled me awhile, yet shall he be subdued.
Deign, Sire, still send me to the embattled line ;
Thine be the conquests, but that Captive mine."
Zemberbo thus. Pausing the Monarch sate :
He longed to close with scorn the bold debate,
But feared a foe in one so stern and great ;
So, feigning frankness in his voice and eye,
Thus to his rankling heart he gave the lie :—
"Why, what a jest is here ! our Man of might
Deigning to pray us for one Captive Knight,—
The Man of our right hand, the Man whose name
To Fez is safety, and to Fez is fame !

Go to thy palace, Chief; the Captive there
Shall come to thee, released : those chains had ne'er
Been put upon him, had we deemed that he
Was honoured farther in thy thoughts to be.
Rest thee the night, come back to us at morn,
One day thy presence must our Court adorn;
Then haste to war, and take the wished-for town;
And be thou still the glory of our Crown."

III.

How sweetly sleeps, delivered from his thrall,
The Captive Julian in Zemberbo's hall!
For, in his dream, he hears the boys at play
On Lisbon's streets, and evening roundelay,
To whose blithe spiriting the olive maids
Of Tagus dance beneath the chestnut shades.

Slowly Zemberbo entered; drawing near
The youth, he touched and roused him with his spear.
Then called his guards: "Guards, do our wish!—But
hold!

What mean these cries without? By Allah! they are
bold!

Again? What ho! my arms! Each man his blade!
Bela, look forth and say what means the mad parade."

IV.

Thus they within. Meanwhile a mob without
Around Zemberbo's palace fiercely shout,
Roused by Zenone's arts: she caused the thing
Be done, as if commissioned by the King,

Who feared the Chief, a traitor : and she made
The rabble roar, as if they lent their aid
Unto their King. All this was done that so
Zemberbo's heart might to rebellion grow.
Thus rage the populace; o'er the swarthy host,
Swayed to and fro, the fiery brands are tossed.
"Allah be praised ! the traitor-den's aloof
From other homes ; up with them to the roof,
Up with your torches ! So ! The King has doomed
The rebel thus to be with fire consumed."
Such was the cry : And many a brand was flung,
And seized the palace with its flaming tongue.
"Down with the traitor !" yell they, as they spy
Zemberbo glaring from his lattice high :
Terrible glaring out, from side to side
Far stretching he looked out. "Down with him !"
cried

A thousand voices. Back the Chieftain sprung.
Below, his doors were widely open flung.
Borne through the entrance crowding numbers press ;
But turned the foremost from a stern redress,
Back screaming turned, rolled back the fickle wave,
And to the light their hideous quittance gave :
Eyes gashed across, bones of the brow laid bare,
Noseless and earless heads the work declare
Of swords within : Fast fled the suffering brood
Howling, and as they howled their mouths were filled
with blood.

Scarce conscious, sympathetic, back dismayed
That sea of umbered visages was swayed.
Save ! save ! for lo ! forth flashing, coming on,
Like Eblis darkly from his blazing throne,
Strides stern Zemberbo, drives the human rack,
His sable globe of warriors at his back

Round Julian, onward to the central square
Of Fez : their haughty station shall be there.
And round the Captive firmly, mutely stood
The warrior troop, and faced the multitude :
For rallying, circling, wavering, serrated
With hollowed far-retiring flaws of dread
And bold abutments of vindictive rage,
Anew the mob their warfare 'gan to wage.
In dark concentric orbit round his band
Slow stalked Zemberbo, scimitar in hand ;
Slow, sternly silent : with his front of war
He faced his foes, and kept them faint and far.

Thus passed the hours till, bravely kept at bay,
The angry rout began to melt away.
Raising his sword, the Chieftain waved it round,
Then stooped, and with it wrote upon the ground
(His aspect lightening with a savage glee,
Like stormy sunburst on the darkened sea)
Short notes of desolation—war, blood, fire,
Captivity to child, to wife, to sire.

“ So be ye read at morn, and on to noon,”
He said, “ my lessons, to be bettered soon !
We thank thee, Abusade, for hearts resolved,
And work, half dreamt of, on our swords devolved !
Guards, do our wish : be prompt : the dawning hour
Must see us far beyond the tyrant's power.”

Ere ceased the Chief, his sable men had bound
The Captive's eyes, and borne him from the ground.

CANTO · III.

MOTHER AND SON.

The Captive's eyes are freed. A corridor
Has brought the party to a guarded door,
Guarded by eunuch slaves. But hark ! within
A lady singing to her mandolin :
Swell the soul's bursts, the sweet relapses die.
Moved was the swarthy Chieftain to a sigh.
His nod won prompt admittance : by the hand
He took the Captive from his pausing band,
And led him in. Alone a lady sate,
Of faded beauty, darkly delicate ;
Downcast her eyes ; upon her hand she leant
Her cheek of sorrow : for the song was spent.

"Zara !" the Chieftain said, "dear sister-twin !
Heed'st thou not me ? Must I no welcome win ?"

How started she ! how to her brother sprung she,
Naming his name ! how to his bosom clung she !
Soft to her couch he led her by the hand,
There made her sit, and there her face he fondly scanned.
"Ay, look at me," she said ; "long years have done their
part,
And the deep shares of grief have ploughed this brow
and heart.

But grief nor years have hurt my love for thee,
Nor thou severe—oh, how severe to me !
No, no, indeed ! I'll call thee not severe !
Come to this heart, my brother ever dear !
O thou twin-being of my life ! can I
Forget thy love for me so pure and high,
In our young days ? Our kindred early lost,
Mine all thou wert, and in thyself a host !

All later sorrows, lo ! they're past away,
For thou art come to live with me for aye."

"No," said Zemberbo : " Not for Fez alone
Have been my battles, to maintain the throne :
I've fought for thee, for thee I still must fight,
To win a dawn o'er thy dishonoured night."

"'Twere kinder far," the lady sighed, " if thou
One little message from me wouldst allow :
Tell but my son his mother pines in thrall,
And win his visit to this lonely hall.

Yes, yes, my brother, you will bring my son,
Never to leave me till my days be done ;
And not by me, but Allah's power, made wise,
He'll join us in the Prophet's Paradise.

"But let me not be selfish : stands not there
A wounded captive, by thy special care
Brought me to heal? Come near," she softly said,
Turning to Julian ; " can I give thee aid ?
Thou weep'st : Ah yes ! thy mother dwells afar,
And little sisters ask thee back from war ;
Gay vests they sew for thee, much-loved ; and still
To look for thee they climb the green cleft hill,
From morn to noon they look, they watch for thee
Till gleams the sweet moon through the chestnut-tree.
But weep not : Allah bless my balms for pain,
And thou shalt see thy mother's home again !"

Why wept young Julian ? He could only tell
Not for himself his tears, but for that Lady, fell ;
Since first her look, her voice, had made him start,
And waked a thousand memories in his heart.

" His mother's home is here ; lo ! he's the same,
And none but he, that from thy body came :
Look to him, Zara ; know'st thou not thy son ?
But to our Prophet's faith he must be won."

Zemberbo thus. Forth springing, she made bare
The Captive's neck ; she found, she kissed it there,
The mark, remembered long. Her hand she laid
Soft on his shoulder, and his face surveyed.
Faint in her joy she murmured :—" O my son !
My long-lost child, but now my dear found one !
Thou'rt come at last to bid my griefs be o'er,
And live with me, and never leave me more ?
But oh, these rags, what mean they ? must I, too,
Of sorrows ask, and sufferings borne by you ?
But they are past. Sit here, my boy, and see
The better fortune I had shaped for thee !"

She said, and, having led him to a seat,
Unrolled a silken web before his feet,
Wrought of fine needlework, and showed thereon
—Her smile the while appealing to her son—
A gallant warrior in a princely garb,
Before ten thousand bounding on his barb.
High looked his eye and far, as doth a king's,
Who proudly home his conquering army brings.
He in the van : behind, his thousands came ;
Instinct each soldier with his leader's fame,
Beyond his own, with double ardour trode ;
Wide flung the uplifted spears their sheen abroad ;
Shone banners terrible ; and trumpets high
The whole attempered with dread harmony.
One spirit ruled the whole : So prompt to dare,
The wingèd triumph seemed to rise in air.
But blind to all beside, to him alone
That mother pointed in the van who shone.
And lo ! the wonders of a mother's heart,
Which to her hand could thus her love impart—
So hoarded well—so lost not through the tide
Of long, long years—so to her work supplied :

True to the dear and unforgotten face,
Her long-lost boy's, her soul had known to trace
The beauteous copy from his childhood fair;
And Julian smiled to see his features there.
Nor less she smiled through tears of conscious joy,
And scanned his face:—" 'Twere true, my princely boy,
But for vile cares which mar thee, and which we
Ne'er thought entitled in our work to be;
From which alone we failed thy face to know,
And, if not told, unclaimed had let thee go.
Well hast thou done, my heart, well hast thou done!
Say this for me, my unforgotten son!
Declare for me! and in this thing behold
A mother's love to work a dream of old!"

Why bursts not forth the Captive's heart to bless
Such love entire? New fears his heart repress.
There on the precious web he saw inwrought
With love's device for him a perilous thought;
His imaged form in Moslem robes was drest,
A caftan blue flowed o'er his linen vest,
And round his brow the turban's deep green fold
The princely lineage of the Prophet told:
So by this sign he feared his mother now
Earnest would have him to the Prophet bow.
Nor from that mother could his gloom be hid,
And thus his fears unguessed she fondly chid:—
"No more of this! Are not those dark days gone?
And all thy sorrows vanished with my own?
And now this hand, which wrought that cloth, must take
Its pattern thence, and garments for thee make,—
The turban first; oh, let me wreath it now
Divinely green, my son, around thy brow!
To thee, to me, one faith, one hope be given;
And I'll not miss thee in the Prophet's Heaven!"

Dark waxed the Captive's face, as fixedly there
He stood, nor answered to his mother's prayer ;
Far turned his eye, as if he could not brook
The silent pleading of a mother's look.
Her, sudden trembling seized : Around she glanced,
As if to see some danger new advanced ;
Zemberbo's frowning brows her bosom fill
With dread, and thus she wails the anticipated ill :—
" So then, my son must go, and I be left
A desolate thing, how utterly bereft ! "

" I will not go ! My mother ! look to me ! "
That son exclaimed. " Might I but live with thee !
What shall I say ? what do ? For thy dear sake,
All bonds, save of dishonour, would I take !
For in my heart and soul I hold thee one
To claim the noblest service of a son ! "

" Go on, Sir Youth ! Swear," said Zemberbo, " Swear
By Allah she is worthy of all care.
Were she the pure as once I knew her pure,
High should she sit, nor darksome days endure ;
Above ten crowns, a boast, a joy to me,
Above all price my bosom's twin should be !
But for that she was pure, and is not now,
The Prophet holds my high recorded vow,
To do my vengeance on thy father-king
Who dared to shame my Lilla Zara bring.
Captived and wounded when a Prince he lay
In Zemra's Palace : there his life away
Was ebbing fast ; but there my sister dwelt
The while, and pity for his youth she felt.
Each precious bleeding rind, she knew its power,
And every virtual plant, and every sovereign flower
Beneath the moon ; and how to win them knew,
On Atlas gathered in their nightly dew.

And to their powers she joined a spell of might
(The moon consenting, and the stars of night);
And Allah blessed her work of sweet young ruth,
And up from death she raised thy father's youth.
Now what for Lilla Zara shall be done?
How shall he grateful be to his redeeming one?
He tempted her; she fled with him by night,
And in his kingdom showed her tarnished light.
Well, style it love (omnipotent, they say):
What then? You deem not his could pass away?
His father dead, 'twas his to mount the throne;
Now then we'll see him glad his faithful one to
own!

Dog in his heart, he sate thereon; but she,
How worthless now, no mate for him must be!
Forsooth! no doubt! her glory he desired,
But other queen his kingdom's wants required;
And thus, although my sister was his spouse,
His priests of Rome dissolved his marriage vows,
Divorcing them; and thus it was decreed
By policy that she must be a weed,
Cast out and trampled down! From Portugal
I swept her hither to this sunless thrall,
But missed her only boy: From blushing day
Here have I kept her hid, here shall she stay
Till with thy father's blood I wash her shame away.
For Fez I fought, but for my sister more,
To slay thy sire, or take him: for I swore,
Could I so take him living, to complete
My vengeance, with his blood I'd wash her feet.
Even should she die, embalmed unburied, she
Shall wait the chance, washed with his blood to be.
But now, for thee, Sir Captive:—Hither sent,
I meant to follow thee, my spirit bent

To change thy faith, to keep thee dwelling here,
Thy mother Zara in her bonds to cheer,
Till I should do my vengeance ; in my mind
Respect for thee and power were then designed,
Thy mother lifted with thee. But the King
Thus far has turned my purpose on the wing,
That I will smite him too who spurned my will,
In thee thus fettered, and insults me still,
And hunts my life : For this, from off his throne
Down will I hurl him, and I'll sit thereon.
Then, when my vengeance is fulfilled, with me
High shall thy mother sit, and happy shall she be ;
Thou, for her sake, the man of my right hand,
Honour shalt have, and place, and wide command.
But mark, Sir Captive, this :—The Prophet's faith
Here must thou take, or thou must die the death.
Thy father's blood that's in thee must be spilt,
Unless our Islam change its native guilt.
Thy mother's blood that's in thee must not live,
The lie degenerate to its font to give :
What ! shall the blood that's of the Prophet's seed,
Maintain a traitor to the Prophet's creed ?
So for your father's, for your mother's sake,
Perish you must, unless our faith you take.
Brief now : behold your mother : live or die :
You know the terms : we wait for your reply."

" Now, now, dear mother, deem me not unkind,"
The Captive said ; " but bear it in thy mind,
That I have loved thee with a soul which scorned
The fears of death, not yielding to be turned
To bribed apostasy—oh, tempting sin,
The bribe thy presence, and my joy therein !
Nor wilt thou change thy faith. But yet one Lord,
Though differently by us on earth adored,

May mildly judge us, to one Heaven may save
Our souls, when we shall rise from out the grave.
So hope, so bear thou up. Give her relief,
Sweet Christ ; I cannot live and look upon her grief !”

“ Ho, guards !” Zemberbo cried. They came and
bound

The Captive's eyes anew, and bore him from the ground.
Then, oh hē felt, as he was borne away,
His mother's clinging kiss, which drew his heart to stay.
Torn from her grasp, he heard her struggling plaint,
As sore bereaved she fought against restraint ;
How wished by him unheard ! “ Off ! let me free !
Save me, my boy ! Come back ! Oh, come and be
A young believer for thy mother's sake !
Stay, stay, and teach me then thy faith to take,
That I may come unto thy Paradise ;
My heart so longs to have thee in the skies !”

II.

Forth borne, and onward through the breathing night,
Freedom was given to Julian's limbs and sight.
Within the city wall the party stood,
A stream in front, behind a scattered wood.
The skirring moon flew on her shining track,
And from her horn-tips tossed the wispy rack,
Boring the West ; o'er snowy Atlas high,
Ranged through the clearness of the southern sky,
With lengthened beams the stars told morn was nigh.
“ Disperse, disguise ye, shun that vengeful King,”
Bespoke the Chief his guards ; “ you know the spring
Beyond the northern wall ? I'll wait you there :
Steal through the various gates : once more, Beware !
Away ! away ! this youth shall be my care.”

They went. To Julian said the Chief: "We spare thee
For one test more; let time and thought prepare thee:
O'er Fez we'll ride; we hold thee in our power,
To deal with thee in that decisive hour.
Come on with me; beyond the tyrant's thrall
This stream shall sweep us, issuing 'neath yon wall.
But ha! what's this?" For glimpsing points of mail,
Seen through the trees, his startled eyes assail.
Armed guards came on:—"Yield to thy King; prepare,
Sir Chief, thy bloody outrage to declare!"
They cried. Forth flashed Zemberbo's scimitar,
And on the foremost fell its edge of war
With sharing gash; and through a second fast,
And through a third, the shearing vengeance passed;
Still met the hemming foe with savage haste,
And shed defiance far and killing waste.
Like fire-scrolled parchments, shrunk his shag lips round,
Baring his ivory teeth that fiercely ground;
Heaved his wide nostril with disdainful ire;
Shook his black locks; gleamed his great eye of fire;
Swept his unbaffled arm: with many a stride
Far-shifting, sped his work from side to side,
Till, pressed by numbers, in the stream he dashed,
A moment sank, then rose, and fiercely flashed
Above the breasted billows, highly waved
His dripping sword, and thus the danger braved:—
"Caitiffs, we yet shall meet! yea, tell your King,
Of bloody sabres shall we presents bring.
High on his turrets watching, let him see
Our coming-on, which gloriously shall be
By lights of burning towns—wild measuring line,
O'er hill and valley shall it stretch and shine!
Now for the lantern of yon imaged moon,
To guide us forth: vengeance—we'll have it soon!"

He said, and down into the waters went ;
They gurgled round him, nor his reascent
His watchful foes could see. But hark ! that shout
Beyond the wall : the stream has borne him out.

III.

And to his shout, thrice with his scimitar
Zemberbo smote the wall, the earnest of his war.
Yet not his soul indignant was content
Till, fear-defying, to the gates he went,
And smote them too. Then northward, swift of foot,
He ran, lest mounted foes were in pursuit ;
Rough hills in view, there he can hide a space
From foes pursuing, and defy their chase.
But lo ! comes on a stranger on his barb,
Through the dim dawn, of Moorish front and garb.
Stood in his path Zemberbo, questioned high
Of name and place, and claimed a prompt reply.
“ A friend to Fez ; and tidings for the King,”
The horseman said, “ but death for thee we bring,
If thus you dare our onward way to bar :
Give place, and shun our weightier scimitar.”
“ Friend to the tyrant ? perish for that word !”
Zemberbo cried, struck down the stranger’s sword,
Disarmed him, smote again, and hewed away
His turbaned head, far rolling in the clay.
Plunged the chafed charger ; from the quivering trunk
Forth spun the purple life-strings, ere it sunk ;
Nor sunk it yet, but sate a hideous sight,
And still it held the reins with hands convulsed and
white,
Till, tumbled by the victor from its place,
He sate instead, and urged his vehement pace.

And on, fast, far he flew ; nor scorned to bless
The gallant steed, whose speed was only less
Than his winged heart indignant : He caressed
The tossing mane that swept his urging breast,
And toyed with it in the fierce dallying play
Of spirit burning for a boundless sway.
But turning oft, the Fezzan towers he cursed.
Up the steep ways he strained, down on the vales he
burst,
Devoured the plain, and swam the rapid stream,
And shook its coldness from him like a dream.
Uprose the sun ; straight through a dower's ground
The Chieftain rode, disdaining to go round ;
Brushed down the crashing tents, nor stayed to hear
The awakened sleepers with their cries of fear.
Noon passed : eve came : he saw the rushing sea,
In great accordance with his energy.
Then by the tawny sands Zemberbo went,
And reached his camp, and rested in his tent.

CANTO IV.

THE BATTLE.

Who sent those armèd men to seize or slaughter
Zemberbo, scarce escaping by the water ?
The Monarch sent them. Reached by those alarms
Of midnight outrage and Zemberbo's arms,
Startled he stood. Zenone came and threw
Over the whole her own convenient hue :
Zemberbo (thus deceptive she explained),
His heart still gloomy for his kinsman chained,
With many a threat of his vindictive ire
Had roused the loyal city ; they with fire

Had striven to burn him, that he ne'er might go
To do his vengeance as a traitor foe ;
But they had failed. It gave the Monarch cheer
Thus of his city's loyalty to hear;
But still he feared the baited Chief; and still
His rising wish was him at once to kill,
Could it be done : The Monarch long revolved
The growing purpose, and at length resolved :—
" His death's our only safety; die this hour
Zemberbo must, while yet he's in our power."
Zenone wished not this; not hers to slay
The instrument of her avenging day,
Coming apace : She pled, but pled in vain
To spare the Chief—the King will have him slain.
At every gate and outlet of the town
Prompt guards were placed to cut the rebel down,
Nor let him pass. Found by that armed band,
Zemberbo smote them till his weary hand
Could smite no more ; unequal to them all,
Plunging he took the stream, and 'scaped beneath the
wall.

II.

Unfettered, scathless from that midnight fray,
Back to the Palace Julian made his way;
Zemberbo's plans rebellious he declared,
And bade the Monarch be for war prepared.
The war came on : So great Zemberbo's sway,
He from their fealty drew his camp away.
Yet well to be opposed ; so many kings
To his defence the Fezzan Monarch brings,
So many chiefs, so many princes : They
Zemberbo's power and traitorous array,

A bad example, fearing, deem it now
The time to check him, nor his growth allow.
And Julian joins them : for his mother's sake,
That her from darkness he to light may take,
Oh how he longs Zemberbo's power to break !
And for his father's, that the Chieftain's wrath
No more may plague him and contrive his death !
And for his Geraldine's not less, that she
With ruined Fez may not a victim be !
He sent his sire a message, stating all
That had befallen him in his captive thrall ;
And praying him to watch the coming fight,
And send a squadron of reservèd might,
To turn the battle and Zemberbo smite ;
But not himself to lead it on, that so
Safe he might keep from his inveterate foe.
Should they Zemberbo quell, to Portugal
Her old demands shall be conceded all—
So swear the Fezzan King ; and Geraldine,
Pledge of the friendly peace, O Julian, shall be thine.

III.

"And fear not, weep not, Love !" thus fondly said
The Captive's farewell to his Moorish maid,
As in the sweetness of the twilight hour
They sate together in a garden bower :
'Twas ere he went to battle. "Down amain
If we Zemberbo smite, to thee again
I'll come ; and I will take thee from this shore,
Light of my life ! the dark-blue waters o'er,
To banks of beauty, where the Tagus roves
Through the long summer of his orange groves.

And when thou turn'st thee to the southern star,
And think'st upon thy native home afar,
Thou shalt not weep; I have thee by the hand,
My heart is thine, my land shall be thy land.
I feel, I feel my love's unbounded debt!
May God forget me when I thee forget!"

"No, no," said Geraldine; "it must not be!
Risk not the fight, come not again to me!
My sisters, and my brother, who but I
Must watch them for our mother in the sky?
She bade me love them well, she bade me make them
The lambs of Christ; how then can I forsake them?
Yet in this hour I'll say it,—dear, O Youth,
Art thou to me for thy heroic truth,
Far more than thrones, and crowns, and kingly brows!
Sweet Prince, beyond what female grace allows,
Think me not light and bold; but all my life
I'd love to be thy true and faithful wife.
It cannot be. But hark!" She softly said,
And to her Julian bent her beauteous head.
Was it to whisper? Or his cheek to touch
With hers so soft? How little, yet how much!
'Twas nature's holy kiss! No sooner paid,
Than forth away she flitted through the shade.

IV.

Uprose the sun: By Rasalema's side,
The Fezzan river, moved in martial pride,
A mingled host from various realms, to stem
Zemberbo's treason, and the diadem
Maintain of Abusade: in rank and square
Swarming they join, and for the march prepare.

Loud blew a thousand trumpets ; deep and high
Was filled the compass of war's harmony,
Attempered terrible : thrilling it shook
The soldier's heart, and raised his daring look.
Outflew a thousand banners. And the mass
Of moving valour shook the valley pass
With sounding tread. From the high walls behind
Of Fez came shouts upon the morning wind ;
There myriads stood, and bade their army on
To conquer for the city and the throne.
So shall they conquer ! How shall he subdued
The embodied kingdoms' warlike multitude ?
Puffed yellow Copts are here, and soldiers brave
From Nubian hill and Abyssinian cave.
The unshadowed lands, that hear each sultry noon
The thunders 'yond the Mountains of the Moon,
Have sent a few bold men ; but many a swarm
Gives Negroland, scarce less the dusk and warm.
Fierce kingdoms on the west to Ocean's brink,
And they whose horses the far waters drink
Of Syrian streams, have men enlisted here.
The warlike Berbers from the hills more near
Of crescent Atlas and the vales between,
The blameless Shelluhs, and the aspects keen
Of mountain Errifi, and Hea's wild castes,
That scream like eagles on the lofty blasts,
March on to battle. Lo ! the army's pride,
The Hentets on their fine-haired horses ride ;
With hordes unnumbered from the lesser states
Of Atlas southward to the Land of Dates.
From Tremecen, Azogue, Zenhagian, Hoar,
And Heneti, brave tribes that hunt the boar
Far in the gorges of the snowy hills,
Whose glossy range its southern border fills,

Or roam wild Angab's desert to the banks
Of soft Moluya, fill the Fezzan ranks.
Two days they marched ; the third beheld them stayed :
Their fair encampment in a vale was made.
Beyond it lay, a narrow pass between,
A larger valley, and an equal scene
Of martial pomp ; for there the traitor host
Of dark Zemberbo kept their evening post,
And hoped the coming morn. Not less possess
Of hope, the Royal army took their rest.
By heaven and earth ! it was a goodly sight
To see their tents beneath the setting light,
Encircling with their white pavilioned pale
A little hill mid rising in the vale.
Cedars and palms, with sunlight in their tops,
In leafy tiers grew up its gentle slopes.
Green was its open head, there walked or sate
The Captains and the Kings confederate.
West through the vale delicious lay unrolled
The lapse of rivers in their evening gold,
While far along their sun-illumined banks
Broke the quick restless gleam of warlike ranks.
North, where the hills arose by soft degrees,
Stood stately warriors in the myrtle-trees,
And fed their beauteous steeds. From east to south
Armed files stood onward to the valley's mouth.
From out the tents the while, and round the plain,
Bold music burst defiance to maintain,
And hope against the morrow's dawning hour.
Nor the gay camp belied the inspiring power :
From white-teethed tribes, that loitered on the grass,
Loud laughter burst, fierce jests were heard to pass ;
Around the tents were poured the gorgeous throngs
Of nations blent, with shouts and martial songs.

Nor ceased the din as o'er the encampment wide
Fell softly dark that eve of summer-tide.

V.

Gray morn appeared. "My horse!" Zemberbo cried;
And forth was brought, shrill-neighing in his pride,
His battle-horse—from Araby a gift,
White as the snows, and as the breezes swift :
A chosen foal, on Yemen's barley fed,
In size and beauty grew the desert-bred,
Fit present for a King : his burnished chest,
Branched o'er with veins, and muscles ne'er at rest,
Starts, throbs, and leaps with life ; his eyeballs glow ;
Quick blasts of smoke his tender nostrils blow.
The Chieftain sprung on him. The rolling drum
Announced his signal that the hour was come
His men should move : Trumpet and deep-smote
gong

Quell to the draining march the closing throng.
On through the short defile, compact and slow,
Betwixt the vales, Zemberbo's squadrons go.
Lo ! the King's host. The mutual armies seen,
Fierce shouts arose, and claimed the space between.
Paused not the rebel phalanx : On each hand
Hung cloudy swarms, whence, ranging in a band,
The stepping archers, with their pause compressed,
Let loose the glancing arrows from their breast.
Nor less from loyal bows the arrowy rain
Dark on the advancing column fell amain,
Advancing still : in crescent-shaped array,
The Fezzan host in its embosomed bay
Receives it deep ; but sharpens round away,

Till curling to the column's flanks it turns,
And turning bores them with its piercing horns.
Yet onward still, still onward through the fight,
That column pushed its firm continuous might,
Till, widening out, it spread a breastwork far
Across the plain, and mingled deep the war.

But where is Julian? At the break of day
Came on his father with a bold array,
Brought by the message of his son; but fear
Disdaining for himself, himself is here
Leading his warriors on, sooner to bar
Zemberbo's rise, and end a long-protracted war.
Oh how rejoicing to his native band
Did Julian leap! His father, hand in hand
He'll fight with him! And, through that stormy day,
They crossed Zemberbo in his fellest way.
Faint toiled the staggering battle. Fresh and strong,
A giant troop came dashing along,
Grim set, reserved for this: Lo! bare of head,
The black compacted turm Zemberbo led;
Low couching, forward bent: and stern and still,
His sword intensely waited on his will,
Held pointed by his side. Across his path
Resistance came, and eased his rigid wrath,
Which bowed him corded down: How towering rose
The mighty creature, and made shreds of foes;
His face, as far he bounded to destroy,
Bright with the sunshine of his warlike joy!
He pointed to the thickest of the fight,
There fought the King of Portugal, with might
There Julian fought; deep plunged into the fray
That sable corps, and cleared the crush away;
Then, with the stress of numbers hemming round
That King, they bore him from the embattled ground.

And bore his son ; but not one wounding blade
Was dealt on them, for so Zemberbo bade :
Thus Julian and his sire were captive made.
Their capture smote with fear the Fezzan host ;
It paused, it wavered, turned, fled—all was lost.

VI.

" Oh for our warriors back ! " young Geraldine
Stood on her Palace at the day's decline,
And longing thus she sighed. Far looking forth,
She saw a coming from the purple north.
Behind in Fez a buzzing murmur rose,
Like as of men presentient of their woes ;
For there's a sharpness, not of ear or eye,
Which tells to waiting realms of ruin nigh,
A sense prophetic : not one fugitive
Was yet come in the evil news to give ;
Yet seemed o'er Fez the air instinct with ills,
Seemed running whispers over all her hills.
To cries of fear they waxed, and crowds amain
Stood on their roofs and looked unto the plain :
There now they come, in straggling disarray,
The weary relics of some fatal day :
Far bends the rider o'er his staggering steed,
And scarcely seems the expected walls to heed,
Scarce lifts his feeble eyes : each man alone
In deep unsocial stress of mind comes on.
Forth going, thousands meet them ; thousands wait
To bid them welcome at each friendly gate ;
In anxious silence thousands look and long
To find their kin in that returning throng.
Absorbed in fear stood Geraldine, and viewed
With dizzy eyes the thickening multitude.

Night fell : she listened : swelling from afar
Came music on, as of triumphant war.
It ceased : how throbbed her bosom, half relieved
To think her ear had haply been deceived !
But oh yon moving lights ! and oh the tread
Of marching squadrons, deep, concentrated !
And tinklings of the horse ! Cries of command,
Distinctly heard, proclaim the foe at hand,
Heard round from post to post ; the points of light
Glance to and fro, and widen through the night ;
The solid tread is fused to swarming din
Of men who nightly bivouac begin.
"Zemberbo's camp ! Ah me !" the damsel sighed,
And to her chamber through the darkness hied.

CANTO V.

THE FIRE.

Behold Zenone, as she sits by night,
All pale and pensive, robed in virgin white !
Her chief of eunuchs came ; absorbed in thought,
Her eyes she raised not, and she saw him not.
But Melki bowed and kissed her silken feet,
Raised back his withered brow her eye to meet,
Then seized her hand. She started : "Slave !" she said,
"I know thee faithful, but I'm past thy aid.
Why com'st thou, then ? Away ! I love thee not,
And little have I done to cheer thy luckless lot."

"Italian flower !" upstarting said the slave,
"The land that gave thee birth to me my being gave !
I'd have thee be a Queen magnificent !
Like bow, to serve thee, is my spirit bent !
To our own Italy we'll turn."

"No, no!"

Zenone sighed : "How could I thither go?
In that fair land first lightened on my eyes
The suns of summer from the crystal skies.
How fair and glad ! But glad to me no more !
The ghosts would meet me on the dreary shore !
I see the flames ! I hear my mother's cry !
Is this a monstrous dream ? Where, what am I ?
Why should I live ? Oh let me die away !
Love, Pride, Ambition, Power, so perish they.
Even boasted Genius, Heaven-endowed to raise
The young religion of man's primal days,
When Virtue was an ardour, not a thing
To wait on Habit for a tutored wing,
By Passion maddened, worse than doomed to die,
How oft it turns its glory to a lie !
What then is life, if thus the goodliest fall ?
Cease, my vexed soul, 'tis vain delusion all !"

"So give us active joys, nor let us waste
Our heart in dreams ; but plan and do in haste :"
The eunuch said. Zenone answered this :—

"Ha ! think'st thou, slave, that aught shall make me
miss

The only triumph that can be my bliss ?
No : I shall come before a nation's eyes ;
Fez, she may curse me, she shall ne'er despise.
I to her painted roll my name refuse,
Of spotted harlots in these silken stews ;
Yet shall that name in Fez be ne'er forgot,
But stamp her annals with a burning blot.
Come on, Zemberbo, thou art linked with me ;
Careering twins in vengeance shall we be !"

"He's come ; he's here : our army smitten down,"
The eunuch said, "this night he'll shake our town ;

But strong, defended well, Morocco near
In arms to thwart him in preventive fear,
And aid our King, though doomed, yet still it may
For many a moon stave off the evil day."

Up springs Zenone ; o'er her countenance pass,
In flamings like a chemist's kindled glass,
The varying passions. Settled, pale, and still,
A deadly whisper thus declared her will :—
"My hour is come ! We'll let Zemberbo in,
And do the rest ! Come on with me ! No din !
Tread softly, Child ! Hark ! of my mortal cup
The King shall drink, 'twill dry his spirit up ;
Then to his roof let him be carried, there
To win the coolness of the freer air ;
When round him there his children gathered be,
My fire shall catch them, nor shall let them flee :
My father's house and lineage to the flame
He dared to give, I'll do for him the same.
Far then we'll go. But come, my inner room
Must better fit us for our work of doom."

She said, and going in her stern intent
Locked up and pale, behind her Melki went.

II.

O'er Fez triumphant, with embattled din
Zemberbo rode : Zenone let him in,
Through Melki's aid : His grizzly aspect gleamed,
Far o'er his head his coal-black banner streamed.
Forth rushed his ruffian hordes, all kindred ties
Long distant wars had taught them to despise.
What shouts afar ! What shriekings of affright !
And sound of steeds that galloped through the night !

Blaze followed blaze till, one unbroken glare,
Wide o'er the city burned the midnight air.
Chased by the gleam of swords, a wildered throng
From street to street with shrieks were driven along,
With wild back-streaming looks, unmarried maids,
And mothers glaring through the umbered shades,
With clasping babes, and crooked forms of eld
That feebly plained, and by the younger held.
Blood bubbling flowed, and every deed of shame
Was done that links to Hell man's boasted name.

On rode Zemberbo to the central square
Of Fez : The King of Portugal was there,
Brought near his Julian ; firm, in governed mood,
Beside his sorrowing son the Monarch stood.
" Why are you here, my father ? Do you know
The things prepared against you by that foe ? "
Thus Julian spake : " Dark Chieftain on thy steed,
Say, can a gallant soldier have decreed
A King like this should live with shackled arms ?
Why, do but honour to the old alarms
Of mutual war, to him that aye was found
A worthy foe, and let him stand unbound."

" No change of bonds," Zemberbo said, " he'll find,
Till the stark cordage of the grave shall bind
His head, his heart ; beyond the purple hour
When o'er an Arab's feet his blood he'll pour.
That hour is now at hand : No wish of mine
E'er perished : Allah, be the glory thine !
So learn, Sir Youth, to hold thee humble still,
Nor rashly try to thwart my conquering will."

" Spare him !" cried Julian. " Me, strike home on me,
If for our blood thy soul must thirsty be,
He speaks, dear father, of my mother's feet ;
And oh, I fear his scheme he can complete ! "

"Now, now," that father said, "'tis mine to press
Thy heart, my son, for great forgiveness !
Yet her I loved : I only was not bold,
Against my people's wish, my marriage to uphold.
So was she lost. And oh, a father's shame !
Scarce have I dared to tell you of her name.
Yet for her sake, methinks, my love for you
Has been, if possible, above your due.
I know my doom, our captor has explained ;
Yet trust I then his wrath shall be restrained,
Nor farther work against thy youth, but break
Thy galling fetters for thy mother's sake."

"Now is the crisis ! now the last dread hour,"
Zemberbo said, "to bend him to my power !
For this, Sir King, I've led thee forth to meet
Thy Captive son, that thou with him may'st treat,
May'st change his faith, that him I here may make
A prince and chieftain for his mother's sake.
Much has he dared against me ; yet I still,
More than forgiving, shall these terms fulfil,
So thou wilt change his creed. Else, sworn have I,
A doom abides him sterner than to die."

The King, he spake not ; but he stood a space,
How wistful, looking in his Julian's face.

"My father !" Julian said, "thy love for me
Is broad, and deep, and pure as pure can be !
Fain wouldst thou have me saved ; yet well I know
Thy soul would have me ne'er my faith forego.
Ne'er shall it be. Oh, I have dared deny
My mother's heart, and left her lone to die !
Say now—'tis come to this—well are we met,
Ere go we each to pay his bloody debt."

"Give me, my son, the proud young martyr's kiss :
For faith be flint : fear nothing : faith is bliss."

So said that father; and the loyal youth
Impressed the solemn kiss, his pledge of truth.
High stood the King, and spake:—"Rise, Son of Heaven!
Ride in thy chariot: terrible be it driven!
Go forth—go down upon thy foes, and break
The billow of thy wheels on Mahomet's neck!"

Dark, darker waxed Zemberbo; but 'he sate
Silent, his sister's coming to await,
By him commanded hither: Lives she yet?
Or has her day of many sorrows set,
Twice severed from her son? He raised his head,
Startled; there came a litter for the dead.
"Allah! my sister!" groaned the sable Chief,
And ground his teeth to check his softer grief.
Down from his charger springing, lowly bowed
He met the body; 'neath a linen shroud
Embalmed it lay. Brief question asked, he bade
The litter near the captive King be stayed.
Then, "Hear me, see me, judge me, Chiefs!" exclaimed
Zemberbo, turning to his Captains famed:
"I had a sister once; ye knew her shame,—
Her hateful marriage, her dishonoured name:
Stand forth' who deems my wrath was then unmoved;
Or—is there such?—that I her love approved;
Or—where is he?—that vengeance I've forgot;
Behold the triumph of my treasured thought:
Ne'er has it slept: My heart was only slow,
The better to secure this deepest blow."
He said, and turning with a mighty stride,
Drove down into the patient Monarch's side
His steel vindictive; from their snowy sheet
Baring his sister's fixed and bony feet,
O'er them he held the faint sustained King,
To rain his blood thereon, reeking from life's red spring.

"Ho! double vengeance! be the banner brought,
Last from him ta'en!" And to Zemberbo's thought
In wrath refining, and his stern command,
The rustling flag was lowered to his hand;
He wiped her bloody feet with it, and drew
The folds of linen over them anew.

O Julian, then! A flash sprang o'er his eyes,
As high he saw that eager weapon rise;
With short quick cry he turned him as it fell,
And shrunk to hear it glut itself so well;
With panting breast, he saw the foe fulfil
The fearful process of his vengeful will;
Till, by Zemberbo's grasp no more upstayed,
The bleeding Monarch in the dust was laid.
He sprung, he sprung, his father's hand to press,
To kneel, to whisper, and his head to bless;
Till death-divided was their mutual kiss.
He closed his father's eyes; without a tear,
Stately he stood in dignity severe.

Near bursts a sudden glare! Through all its
frame

The Palace burns in one consuming flame.
But see the lovely Fury! Still the brand
Which did the deed is in Zenone's hand.
How shines the creature's face! But to the ground
A camel kneels; she mounts it with a bound,
And rising, glimpsing flees; behind her near,
Through every peril, and through every fear,
To go with her, each toil, each wo to brave,
Another camel bears her eunuch slave.
From land to land she went; but frenzied Pain,
Fell dog, pursued and overtook her brain,
And bayed her down: Down into Etna's tide
Of lava plunged she: this her dying pride,

That the pure fire should be her burial-place,
Nor her heart rot with man's ignoble race.

The Fezzan Palace burns. On every side
The ragged web of flame is wafted wide;
Back drawn, it clings, it climbs, updarting oft
Its far-thrust tongues that curl and lick aloft
All round the roof, still curling inward. There
The poisoned King is dying in his chair :
Zenone's scheme. Young Geraldine is seen
Bathing his brow, with many a kiss between.
His other children—see the dear young band !
Round him they hang, and hold him by the hand.
Urged by the heat, they shrink, they hide their eyes,
They press upon his breast their stifled cries.

One wrench, and Julian's free : One mighty bound
Has borne him clear beyond that guarded ground.
Yon lovely family from the fire he'll save,
Or die with them in one devouring grave !
He nears the Palace, dashing in he dares
The flames—Christ help him now to climb the burning
stairs !

A fearful pause ! Oh, on the roof he springs,
His arms around his Geraldine he flings,
To bear her thence : one kiss upon her brow—
The pillars crack, the blazing rafters bow,
Down goes the roof, the walls down inward go ;
A smoking, smothered mass of ruin glares below !
But where are they whom scarce the twinkling eye
Has ceased to see upon that Palace high ?
Whelmed in its wreck their mingled ashes lie.
Disturb them not ! Of Julian only tell,
He died with her whom he had loved so well.

A WINTER DAY.

Morning.

YON ridge of trees against the frosty east
 Of Morn, how thin, how fine, how spiritualised
 Their fringe of naked branches, and of twigs,
 Distinct, though multitudinous and small!
 Still rarified, they seem about to be
 Consumed to nothing in the candent glow
 Breathed up before the Sun. Lo! in their stems
 His ruddy disc; and now the rayless orb,
 Round and entire, is up, on the fixed eye
 Dilating, swimming with uncertain poise
 From side to side—a great red globe of fire.

Winnowing the high pure ether, go the rooks
 Down to the sea in intermittent trains,
 Far from their inland roost, on the flat merse
 To tear up tufts of grass for grubs below,
 With horny beaks to turn the droppings o'er
 Of pasturing kine, to search the rack of creeks,
 And stalking forage on the shelly shore.
 Sagacious birds! what time the sun goes down
 With streaks and spots on his distempered face,
 High in the airy firmament, a troop

Of maddest revellers, see them wheeling round ;
And oft with sidelong flight slant down the sky
They go ; and oft with clanging wings, the one
Depending as if broke, swooping they fall
Near to the ground, then upward shoot again ;
They scream, they mix, they thwart, they eddy round
And round tumultuous, till all heaven is filled
With a wild storm of birds ! By this they show
Prescience of windy blasts. But when, as now,
They take the morn afar, expect the day
To close in beauty as it has begun.

Rains flood to-day ; the morrow's dawning gleam
Shows us the rawish road all stricken o'er
With lines, like crowfoot prints—the work by night
Of half-constringing frost. On such a morn,
Far in the reeking field, late ploughed, sore washed,
The dazzled eye is caught with flashing points,
Beyond the emblazoned stones of Samarcand.
Admire them at a distance : trace them not ;
Fragments of saucers, from the dunghill borne,
And bottle-necks are all the gems you'll find :
So may mean men, like bits of delf or glass,
Blaze on the world, 'neath Fortune's favouring light.
Thus oft, through half our winter, damp and dry
Alternate daily. But this frost is fixed,
Deep gnarled of fang—so say the weather-wise.
The earth was slowly dried ; the wild ducks oft,
With short quick pinions, and long necks stretched out,
Sped o'er our valley to the plashy springs
That never freeze ; higher o'erhead, now seen
On the pale sky, now lost against the cloud,
Shifting their trailing figures of array,
The wild geese cackled through the firmament,

Far going down upon the softer south :
These be the tokens of a rigorous time.

Here rest The Twins. Here fell they, twins in death,
As twins in birth, and in one grave were laid.
Their widowed mother's only hope, upgrew
The boys in beauty to her loving eye ;
One fair, the other dark, but stately both,
Like two young poplars by a river side.
Force rose and slew our Covenanting men.
Walter was firm ; but Vincent's rasher heart,
Lured by an English damsel whom he loved,
And who, for insult to her father's name,
Abhorred the Covenant, took her Southern creed,
And waxing hotter in the widening breach
Betwixt his spirit and his former friends,
Lifted his hand against his country's faith.
His maid proved false ; she went, and left him lorn—
Oh how forlorn ! Meanwhile for Walter's sake,
The stout defier of their violent hands,
The persecutors seized, and put to death
His mother, sparing not her reverend age.
She died, but dying blessed her Vincent too.
On went the unequal war, still struggling on
From hill to hill, from moor to blood-stained moor ;
And Walter led the Covenanting strength.
Where'er they went, high on the mountain-side,
Above them still, oft through the hurrying mist
Dim seen, a shrouded Form went as they went,
Watched when they camped, with gestures and with cries
Warning of danger, and oft saved their lives.
What can the gray Shape be ? Is it a man,
Or Angel sent to guard them in the wild ?
Here burst the battle : Walter's weaker band

Was swayed, was crushed, was trampled o'er the field.
Three foes bore Walter down ; before him leapt,
To shield his life, that unknown Form, and took
Their spears upon himself ; they pierced him through,
And Walter fell beside him :—" For her sake,
Her dear dear sake, within whose sacred womb
We lay together, face to face, my brother,
Put your arm o'er my neck." Thus Vincent said—
For it was Vincent : side by side they lay,
And Walter put his arm o'er Vincent's neck.
A mother's love, oh, it has more than thews
To throw the Wicked One : it wrestles down
The Angel of the Covenant : it wins
Her headlong son back from the doors of Hell.

Fieldfares and redwings on the dun-blanch'd leas,
And flocks of finches from the stubbles bare,
Still rise before you with thin glinting wings,
As for yon upland through the fields you strike.
'Tis gained. You see the icy cliff remote
Gleam like an opal. Down on the far town
Hangs, like some visible plague, a cloud of smoke,
Steaming discoloured, dusk, but yellower edged ;
And oft some window through its reeling skirts
Red glances. Lo ! far off away, beyond
The valley's northern bound, the tops of hills,
Snowy, serene in spotless purity,
Standing high up in the clear morning air.

Noon and Afternoon.

Creep out and in, and shiver all the day.
But take the country wide, conquer the cold,

And in your frost-fed flush of blood enjoy
The glowing triumph of consummate health :
Heart-cheering most, when shines the mid-day sun,
Sweating the clammy brow of puckered frost
In mellow spots, to tread the rustling skirts
Of woods high hanging on the southern hill.

Stand on this height and listen. The broad noon
How meekly quiet; yet how many a sound
Distinct you catch—the cock from farm remote
To answering farm; the house-dog's deep-mouthed bay;
The petulant yaffle of the cottage cur;
The nicking sound of the slow carrier's wheels,
Far away heard; the children's nearer noise
Of sliding sport; the fagot-felling axe;
And, intermitting oft, from yonder grange
The double-flail: from out the barn-door, see,
A thin light dust hangs in the yellow sun.
That faint vibration far! back, levelled low,
Yon smoky streamer!—'tis the railway train:
'Tis near—'tis buried in the cut embanked,
And hid from sight; but puffs of fat white smoke,
Still onward onward spouting from the ground,
Tell where it is—'tis out—'tis past—'tis gone!
Down by the grange we turn. Forth liting comes
The farm-lass, driving from the byre her cows
To water at the frosty reeking well,
Farrow, ill-haired, and lean, but frisking mad,
Topsy with freedom: through the shrilling air
She twangs her ditty with a nasal twang.
Lo! chanticleer, his yellow legs well spurred,
Leads forth his dames along the strawy ways.
He claps his wings; he strains his clarion throat,
His blood-red comb inflamed with fiercer life,

And crows triumphant : Soul-distressing sound,
When in the pent-up city, ill at ease,
Your keen and nervous spirit cannot sleep,
Hearing him nightly from some neighbouring court !
Oft have we wished the gallinaceous tribe
Had but one neck, and that were in our hands
To twist and draw : the morrow's sun had risen
Upon a cockless and a henless world.
And yet the fellow there, so bold of blast
To sound the morn, to summon Labour up,
Is quite a social power : we'll let him live.
How lifelike now, for he has found a corn,
He lowers and lifts his swelling breast and throat,
And lowers again, with cluck peculiar ; straight,
Their necks outstretched, in rocking haste, wing-helped,
His straggling dames come running all to him,
In affectation of some hoped-for prize
Great beyond measure ; trulier in the pride
Of loving wifehood. He, self-dignified
That portions to his partlets thus he gives,
All to himself denied, crows forth, and round
Stalking in his uxorious majesty,
His mincing toe-tips scarcely touch the earth.

The sun goes down the early afternoon,
And soon will set. A rim of steaming haze
Above the horizon, deeper in its dye
Than the light orange of the general west,
Receives his reddened orb. As through their glades
Westward you go, a sifted dust of gold
Fills all the fir-wood tops ; ruddy below
Their rough-barked stems ; and aye the wings of birds
Twink with illumination, as they flit
From tree to tree across your startled eye.

That gray bowed man has seen a hundred years !
With chips and splinters from the forest roots,
To make his evening fire, he totters home,
Shuffling the withered leaves. How wonderful,
With pipes and valves so manifold and nice,
Cords, bloody knots, and tangled threads of life,
And membranes filmy fine, which plank us in
From the great ocean of Eternity,
Roaring around us, with incumbent weight
In on us pressing,—oh, how wonderful
This sherd of clay should stand a hundred years !
Home goes the poor old man ; if home it be,
Where once were wife and children, but where now
Are want forlorn and ghosts of happy days.
Yet well with thee, old man ! humble and frail
In earthly eyes, yet on thy going out
The angels look, and on thy coming in ;
And trained by thee, not lost but gone before,
Thy family wait to have thee in the skies.

Yon upland wasted, dim-furrowed of old time,
Day loves to linger with Tradition there.
'Tis hallowed ground. By Edward bent and bowed,
Our fathers there from the sour moorland wrung
Their meagre bread ; but aye, blood-earnest men,
For freedom rose they : Right, they made it Might.

Day fades. But more is left than ta'en away :
The social eve, be Winter blest for this—
Friend facing friend, mild speech, and poignant quick
The sharp clear angles of the Attic salt.
Then to the hour, the meditative hour,
Dear to the Muse. Cast large the true seed-thought,
O Son of Song : the seed-field of the world,

Great field of function, dewed with tears and blood,
Is quick of womb : sow : trust no grain will die ;
Fit soil it ever finds, it roots, it grows
Rough crops of action, arts, and schemes of life,
Harvests of time, and garners in the Heavens.

Ebening.

'Tis now the silent night : the full-orbed moon
Hangs in the depth of blue ; scarce shine the stars,
Drowned in her light ; the valleys of the earth
Are filled and flooded with a silver haze.

Of yonder heavens unscaled, so vast remote,
What can man know or tell ? Their milky mists
Of nebulæ, what be they ? A luminous stuff,
As Fancy thinks, to curdle into worlds
And systems yet to be ? Nay, then, Man's art
Daring, has pierced the secret ; has resolved
That luminous matter into stars distinct,
Already formed, but powdering the abyss
Of space with worlds so thick, they seemed, till now,
A cloudy confluence of unfashioned light.

This Man has done—even this. Outdoing this,
Did he not measure, by pure reach of thought,
Those delicate disturbing influences,
Put out like feelers, from the ethereal depths,
Upon our system, by some unborn thing,
As if for cognisance—yearning to be known,
And seen of Man among the works of God,
And praise its Maker in our human hearts ?
And Man, did he not tell, as long and far

He felt it trembling on the soul-sent line
Of his analysis, what it was, and name
The place, and mass, and orbit of a star,
And seize it dawning from the gulfs of space?

But not to drop the bold heaven-climber yet—
Did not Man pluck the lightning from yon skies?
Nay, yoke we not the subtle element
In stated harness, like a visible drudge,
To do our hests? Trembles from shore to shore,
Under the bellies of the tumbling whales,
Along the sightless bottom of the sea,
The electric post with instantaneous news
From State to State. The East and the far West
Shall thus be knit by wonder-working Man,
The southern summer and the lands of snow.
Reverence thyself, O Man, and fear to shame
Thy Godlike nature with debasing sin.

OUR YOUNG PAINTER.

THE beetling shore he roamed,
 Black-bitten, honeycombed.
 High on the ness he watched the press
 Of mystery in the coming waves ;
 Lo ! back the far-related stress
 Spews out the sea from glutted caves.
 Hurrying squall of thunder-blue,
 Slants wildly dashed yon sunburst through.
 Struck by the flash divine,
 What swirls of greening brine !
 Nor less our Boy the bashful woodlands knew.
 He dared the scalp where eaglets dally.
 Heath so lone,
 Whose Ogham Stone
 Reels spectral through the scuds of mist,
 He dared thee in the hour unblest,
 To see the Norland witches rally.

Solemn of beauty, Night,
 Show him for thought thy worlds of light,—
 Thought one with love : Oh, what their lot,
 And what their life in yonder spheres ?
 Have they blood, and have they tears ?

Ken they our earth? Could they but guess
The story of the twinkling dot,
Would they not blame, would they not bless,—
Wonder and blame, yet weep and bless?

From eye to soul our Painter grew.
The visions rose : he dipped and drew :—

Romps of the May,

Girls round "THE CHURCHYARD DIAL" play
"He never moves!" They coax, and flout,
And prank with flowers old Dial out.
He never moves? Time-mockers young,
To yonder graybeard o'er his staff,
Drowning all your treble laugh,
"Vanish!" knells the iron Tongue.—
All in the evening light serene,

"THE VILLAGE GREEN :"

Forth with their pipes of peace the patriarchs sit ;
At hoop and ball the children flit ;
Yon quoiter, from his measured stand,
Casts with consenting eye and hand ;
Here wrestlers, on their listed plot,
One gathered heave, twain-locked, one convulsed knot.—

Her rim of darkened glass,
Missing the shadow of the drinking deer,
"OUR LAKELET" curves in yon embowered bay,
And sleeps beneath the trees away.
The setting Sun flames down yon pass
Of purple mountains ; loyal still to him,

Here lies she more than clear :
Fowl, glossy burnished, in the glory swim.—

Dash on the sea

Goes "MADCAP MARCH" in his terrible glee :

Drift of the spray, how he makes it spin,
As the great white rollers break thundering in !—
The archer Boy she made a toy,
She bid him yoke his doves and go ;
Ah, dimpled craft ! the thrilling shaft
Is through her from the twanging bow :
Deep in the wood she sits "WILDERED" of joy and wo.—
Weave him glory, weave him gloom,
Weird shuttle of the Dreamland loom ;
Wonder of tissue : Stole her right,
Great Presence, ancient "NIGHT."—
Down in the timeless death,
Sin frets with jagged pain yon pinnacles of "WRATH."—
Cease, terror, cease !
Yon Land of Love
Is opening to the Dove ;
The Prince is in our central Peace.
Press to Him, "PILGRIM," press !
Leave Sinai thundering in the wilderness.

The hope that waxed with Phœbe's horn,
Waves pale with yonder wreck on morn :
Paint ! forms be types ; paint ! moods of man
Make and are made by types in Nature's pictured plan.
So paints he : Lord of Art,
His eyes are in his heart.

Ideal true of life, he grew
In all the just and sweet advances.
Songs in the night ! Hope, in thy trances,
He hailed the better ages new :
The iron men, grim Titans they,
Ride onward through their splash of blood ;

But, far on yonder dawn of day,
The Dove is on the mystic Rood.
Man ! to thy Renovation
Art rose a consecration.

Up crows from his purple the gorcock in whirr ;
And he smells, where he dwells, of the forest of fir.
Love built his bower :
The flowering climbers, tangled in their race,
Burst, bell with bell to match ;
And push aloft, in rival grace,
Their soft green horns to curl and catch :
Hail, Bride of beauty, to our Painter's bower !
Wife ! give him, more than mortal dower,
Deepening of heart, from deepening heart to draw
A holier sweetness, a diviner awe.

WASH THE FEET OF POOR OLD AGE.

[A letter from Vienna of the 9th ult. says: "Yesterday their Majesties, after taking the Communion, according to a pious custom, washed the feet of twelve poor aged men, and of the same number of women. Amongst the men was one who was 107 years old. The Emperor and Empress conversed for a long time in the most affable manner with this old man."]

THOU, the King of kingdoms great,
 Thou, the Consort of his state,
 Ye have eaten Heavenly food,
 Jesus' body, Jesus' blood;
 Hence His holy will to do,
 Strength and grace be given to you!
 Be the pledge of this, that crown,
 Sword, and sceptre ye lay down:
 Girt with Jesus' towel be,
 Bow the head and bend the knee:
 Best His warfare would ye wage?
 Wash the feet of poor old Age.

Sitting twelve and twelve, behold
 Men and women poor and old;
 Yet their looks are meekly high,
 For "The Twelve" they typify.
 Here the Austrian Cæsar bends,
 There his Empress condescends;

O

Yet the honour mild they feel,
As they bow and as they kneel,
Washing, as the King of kings
(Heavenliest of His Heavenly things,
In His earthly pilgrimage)
Washed the feet of poor old Age.

Eldest on the stage of men,
Far past our threescore years and ten,
Nought in you but dignity
Can those Royal children see,—
Self-command, if passions keen ;
God's good keeping ; age serene,
Winning, as the setting day
Wears the cognate morrow's ray,
Gleams from lights beyond the grave,
Lights to beautify and save :
They with you in speech engage,
As they wash the feet of Age.

Patriarch, tell the Cæsar, life,
Even the calmest, is a strife ;
Even the longest, is a span :
Pain and fear are born with man,
Many tears and heavy sighing,
(Still the sparks are upward flying !)
All the days that thou hast seen,
Few and evil have they been.
Harp and truncheon, crook and crown,
To the dust must all go down.
Happiest they who, lowly sage,
Wash the feet of poor old Age.

The agèd folk are rising slow,
As the Princely Consorts go ;
Leaning on their staves they rise,
Peace and love are in their eyes,
Shakes their hair in thin white slips,
Murmured blessings move their lips :—
From those Royal heads be far
Treason, stratagem, and war !
Earthquake miss them, plague, and pain ;
Quiet honours crown their reign !
Christ receive them from life's stage,
For they washed the feet of Age !

May 1841.

TO MONT BLANC.

BLANC ! shall we say yon sun to thee comes down ;
 Or goest thou up to him, formed to aspire
 To his red orb that stains thy snows with fire,
 And burns a thousand clouds to glory for thy crown ?

Day's lingering blush upon thy brow still shed
 Shall cool to twilight's keen blue effluence,
 Ere scaling now the glaciers' terrible fence
 Round thy congealèd loins, yon eagle reach thy head.

Each element of nature truest shines
 Round thee. The white unsteady clouds that stream
 From off thy forehead most ethereal seem,
 And the pale moon that high glazes thy savage pines.

Thine, waters great and small of glassiest wave :
 From out thy side the frozen-bearded spring
 Looks with clear eye, like hermit's, glittering,
 Touched by the moon's cold wand ; below pure torrents
 rave.

And who shall dare thy awful skirts to tread,
 When in the tempest-robe thy form retires,
 Wrought of dark thunder and embroidered fires ?
 And the sharp stars of night are keenest o'er thy head.

Oh, not in vain has God built up thy height,
Majestic parent of abstracted forms,
Shaped from man's spirit by thy hurrying storms,
Dread steeps, and silent snows, and clearnesses of light.

Lives there the man durst bear unto thy crown
Of chastest cold, where never sun that shone
Hurt the blue chair of Winter's icy throne,
Feelings and thoughts impure, as in the thick gross town?

The snows of Innocence thy forehead blanch;
Black Horror nods upon thy piney steep;
And Danger, like a giant half asleep,
And falling, leans upon thy falling avalanche.

Scarce has yon eagle reached thy summit hear,
Heaven-towering Blanc, with upward steady wing!—
I leave thy presence; but, in wandering,
I'll see thee oft afar o'er sea and circling shore.

THE TRAGIC POEM OF WOLD.

PERSONS.

HENRY IV.	PHILIP DE VALMA.
LORD WOLD.	MICHAEL ZEBRA.
LORD DUNLEY.	MOUNTNORRIS.
DR ROWTH.	MARTIN.
HASTINGS.	MORLEY.
SIR LIONEL CHAYR.	GORT.
SIR HUGH DE VALMA.	
THE DUCHESS OF WOLD.	BLANCHE.
LADY STAINES.	JANET MOUNTNORRIS.
LADY MERVYN.	RACHEL.
AFRA.	NURSE.

A CAPTAIN OF BESIEGERS, AN OFFICER, A GENTLEMAN, A HERALD,
THE LOYAL HARPER, AN OLD SENESCHAL OF WOLD, THE KEEPER
OF WOLD PRISON, A BAND OF YOUNG GIRLS, GUARDS, SOLDIERS,
MESSENGERS, SERVANTS, &c.

*The Scenes are laid in the west of England, near the borders
of Wales, and in the city of Bristol.*

TIME.—*The Reign of Richard II., and the beginning of
the Reign of Henry IV.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Mouth of a Cave, in the side of a rocky
mountain. Wold Castle seen in the distance.*

AFRA, bearing a small black harp.

Afra. Fear the thunder, House of Wold.
Fear the love of enemies old.
When she hands thy truncheon hold,
Thou shalt perish, House of Wold.

So Merlin spake. Hear it, O House of Wold!
Fear it, thou bloody and distressful House!

Orphan of Wales, I stand,
 Afra, the kinless one ; so stern and sheer
 The black old Boar of Wold he trode us out,
 What time he trampled down our ancient land.
 But I shall see the vengeance ! Years, long years,
 To dwell with sifted winds in whistling caves,
 To live upon the naked haggard edge
 Of nature's last necessities, even this
 Has been my joy of life ! And round thee, Wold,
 Winding the Curse, I walk : The tissue comes not
 Out of my own frail brain : The Wizard spun it
 From Fate's black head, standing far back away
 I' the timeless, worldless, infinite abyss,
 Fixed, all alone. I walk around thee, Wold,
 A seeming simple thing ; but serried spears
 Of rangèd men, nor walls of brass with towers
 Of blue-ribbed steel, could better hem thee in,
 Than does the coil of these poor naked feet,
 Going around thee thus, shutting thee up
 Close with the Doom : Not a child's innocent head
 Of all Wold's house, not a mouse could get out.

[AFRA *retires into her Cave, striking her harp
 vehemently.*

SCENE II.—*A Court in Wold Castle.*

MOUNTNORRIS and MARTIN.

Mount. Aught of Lord Wold ?

Mar. Her Grace is forth to meet him.

Of course she would not own't ; not she : Emotion
 Is not in the Peerage : 'Tis a morning walk
 With Dr Rowth, my family priest—that's all.

Mount. France down on her knees to his dint, the old
 Wold dint !

Mar. Peace cobbled up, he breathes ; but shrewd the tokens,
He breathes not long.

Mount. What's wrong next ?

Mar. What's not wrong ?
Weak is our Second Richard, wroth the land
Against his curled minions. Homeward look
Angry the banished heads. If Wold's to prop
The Throne as wont, the sooner he were come
With great Sir Hugh, the better.

Mount. What Sir Hugh ?

Mar. Who but De Valma ? Know you not ? Patroclus
To our Achilles : Knighted by his patron
Upon the field : Ballads he makes, they say
(And sings them, I suppose), on their own wars :
Isn't that a friend worth having ? So to Wold
With Wold he comes.

Mount. Let's look to our array.

[*Exit* MOUNTNORRIS.]

Mar. And Merlin speed thee ! He was out, forsooth,
with Madam's sire, old Boarship ; so hallow she must
the worm-eaten remnant. When fit for nothing else, he's
good enough for my Captain ! Captain of the Guard of
Wold ! And I'm to do Lieutenant to him ! Our Duchess
and her son don't trust me. Am I to waste my heart on
such people ? Dunley shall be Wold first. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*The Terrace of Dunley Tower.*

LORD DUNLEY and MICHAEL ZEBRA.

Dun. Michael the Marvellous ! Wold you know
already,
Even to her Grace's posset !

Zeb.

Veil your eyes !

No mortal sops for her ! Is not her porridge
Made of star-dust and milk o' the Milky Way,
Brought down by Charles's Wain express for her,
With all the bravery of its harness on,
Cut out of light, with studs and buttons of glory,
All for her Grace—great She of Wold—Duchess
In her own right ? The cloudy fringe of fable
To history's web's all flourished o'er with Wold !
Yonder's the sun, shear me a sheaf o' his rays
For rushes to Madam's feet : Queen Mab to strew them !
But now for Me the Marvellous :—All my spells
Are simply Martin—Martin's our man, my Lord :
I've fixed him ours : He scorns, and would throw up
His present place, but that he waits to see
Dunley the Lord of Wold.

Dun.

Small chance there, Michael.

Zeb. Mervyn, say I, then Wold. Wed, first of all,

Your cousin Mervyn : who so fair as she ?

Dun. My heart lies all that way, but Gloster's ghost
Stands in my path : he was her father's friend,
And I'm his murderer—so she thinks and says,
And spurns my suit ; though I was but the doer
Of the King's will in that. And now, what boots it
That I'm next heir to Mervyn, after her ?
She's young, she'll marry. As for Wold, there also
I'm next of kin ; remote, 'tis true, yet heir,
Failing Lord Thomas. But he too may wed.
Even should he not, scarce is he middle-aged.

Zeb. Forty's the keystone of our arched span,

He's over that. As for love, name it not ;
Oh no, nor marriage : He is not your man
For that soft sort of thing. Look how he turns
The sharp, quick, lively corners of human nature,

Like a mail-plated, jointless crocodile,
 All in one lumbering piece. The pert Old Adam
 Within us has enjoyed his peccadillo
 Afresh at the end o' the dovecot, and is off
 Laughing and capering in his nimble eld,
 Ere stiff, slow Thomas of Wold can heave himself
 Round into view. Marry? Not he, indeed.
 He's maidenly modest too : he'd blush young red
 To have it named to him.

Dun. We'll give him work
 Weightier than blushing ! He has thwarted me :
 I'll pay him back !

Zeb. To-day he's coming home
 From his French wars. We'll keep an eye on him,
 And see how he wears.

Dun. Let Martin have our favour.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Terraced Roof of Mervyn Castle.*

*The LOYAL HARPER, a blind, white-haired old man, with
 a harp, is seen passing by a little way off, led by his
 daughter RACHEL. After them comes a band of young
 girls, dressed in white, and carrying baskets of flowers.*

*Enter BLANCHE hastily, followed by LADY MERVYN
 and her old NURSE.*

Blanche. Quick ! here's our village welcome to Lord
 Wold :

This way, and now, he's looked for to ride in.

Lady Mer. A sweet device ! it makes me glad to see it.

Nurse. Do watch the Silent Lord : see how he'll blush,
 Finding it all for him.

Nurse. I to see Wold

Lady Mer. Why not, good Nurse?

Lady Mer. Would I could end it here !

Nurse. Ay,

Lady Mer. She has seen

Nurse. That you may say.

Lady Mer. May not all this have made her

Nurse. Well, she grew up, and Wold

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Lady Mer.

Heavy, heavy !

Nurse.

Days,

And nights, she sat in darkness, so they tell,
None with her. No one saw her when the pangs
Of travail were upon her. She brought forth
Her man-child thus—Thomas of Wold. And so
The old house yet stands. Oh how that mother's heart
Was set on her still boy—sad we may call him,
As if he had fed on the black milk of sorrow
Within her womb. In youth he dwelt apart,
Haunting the old woods with large white-breasted dogs.
And then he went to war—and who so great as he?
Fain would the Duchess see him wed, but he
Is shy as a virgin. Ay, the old prophecy
Is not for nothing : Wold has had its day.
How now, my Bird? Well, if there's not a tear
In my child's eye !

Lady Mer.

God bless them both !

Blanche.

Amen !

Lady Mer. How dark it grows !

Blanche.

Look up.

Lady Mer.

'Tis black as thunder.

Nurse. Let's in.

Blanche.

List, list ! back comes the Harper,
harping.

[*The HARPER, led by RACHEL, passes back playing a
welcome. The girls follow, singing the welcome.*]

Lady Mer. See what a strange unearthly glistering's cast
Down on those white young children ! And their song,
What a wild sweetness in't ! Look now, they're strewing
Their flowers i' the way : Lord Wold must be at hand.
Under that ominous gleam, is it not like
Some spiritual vision? Hark ! the hollow sound
Of coming hoofs in the grim hush : Two riders !

Nurse. That dark, staid, stately man's the Silent Lord.

Blanche. And who's the fair young Knight that rides
with him?

Why, what a goodly pair! A plague, say I,
O' their old world quarrels! What have we to do
With gear like that, eh? Let's wave to the brave.

[*BLANCHE waves her handkerchief.*

Lady Mer. What a grave sorrow in that face! My heart
Would love to make him glad. But lo! he smiles
Down on the children.

[*Lightning and thunder.*

What a blinding burst
Of fire was there! Ah, mercy! Look! he's down!
The thunderbolt has smote him—'tis Lord Thomas.
Let's have him in. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.—*A Forest Walk near Wold Castle.*

The DUCHESS OF WOLD and DR ROWTH.

Duch. Only one peal.

Dr Rowth. But what a peal!

Duch. The bolt
Struck i' the vale, methinks.

Dr Rowth. Where are those riders?
They should be seen now coming up this way:
They're tarrying long. Lord Wold was one of them,
I'm sure of that.

Duch. Here's some one in great haste:
What can it be?

Enter SIR HUGH DE VALMA.

Sir Hugh. Madam, I take you for
Her Grace of Wold?

Duch. If you're Sir Hugh de Valma,
Welcome to our poor Castle.

Sir Hugh. Let me tell
The end of my errand first :—Lord Wold's hurt somewhat,
But not severely : I do hope and think
'Tis only very slightly ; I may venture
To assure your Grace of that. And yet the bolt
Smote him to earth. It struck at Mervyn gate.

Duch. The Thunder !

Sir Hugh. He's reviving. I've just left him
In Mervyn, tended by the Lady Mervyn.

Duch. In Mervyn !

Sir Hugh. Fearing the imperfect news
Might magnify the matter, and distress you,
I thought it best to come at once myself,
And tell you the strict thing.

Duch. 'Twas kindly done.

Sir Hugh. With your leave, Madam, I'll now back and
join him.

We'll be here straight.

[*Exit* SIR HUGH.]

Duch. The Thunder !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—*An Apartment in Mervyn Castle.*

LORD WOLD and LADY MERVYN.

Lady Mer. Nay then, in the old times,
Such strokes of visitation were held sacred :
They fell on heads that the gods loved—none others.
Be it so still of you !

Wold. Gentlest of maidens,
Do you say this of me ? Here's a new thing :—
Wold hurt, and laid in Mervyn ; yet so pitied,
So cared for, tended so, ay, and by one

Whom he was taught to think his enemy!

What should this mean?

Lady Mer. Oh, do not think me that!
What should it mean but peace? Would I could stay
The old vents of blood betwixt us, I would do it
Even with my very heart!

Wold. Your heart, you say?
Be it so, then. Surely the God of Heaven,
Thundering and lightening so, and bringing me
So to your house, meant you to be my wife
From this strange hour—you, and none else but you!
Were I not up in years, and from my youth
A man of blood, grave too, one not to be
Loved of young virgins, by my soul I'd ask you
To be my own true wife! You're the first woman
I ever set my heart on. How you tremble!
I fear you hate me now?

Lady Mer. Oh no.

Wold. By this chaste kiss, I take thee for my wife.

[*Kissing her.*]

How I do love thee!

Lady Mer. Mine own lord and husband!

Wold. I'll never change from thee! I've been a man
Not of glad days, but I'll be glad in thee!
Oh, ever near me, ever with me,
Thou, like the beautiful, meek, silent light,
The all-moulding light, wilt go into the grain
Of my dull nature, clearing it with new life,
So spiritual and so gracious is thy presence!
But now, to see my mother.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.—*A Court at Dunley Tower.*

MICHAEL ZEBRA.

Zeb. Now then, we're ready for this hasty coming
Of Richard and his train. But here's my Lord.
What bent on next? He was restrained, they say,
Austerely when a boy. I've known such cases,
Where, the curb suddenly withdrawn, the youth,
Defrauded hitherto of due delights,
And losing self-respect from daring once
To taste some lighter joy, unwisely classed,
In teaching him, with things forbidden justly,
And knowing no gradations, has at once,
With a ferocity of liquorish relish,
Unknown to those of looser bringing-up,
Plunged into pleasure.

Enter LORD DUNLEY.

Dun. The game's up : She's Wold's ;
Woody, won, and all but wed—all in a thunder-clap.

Zeb. What means my Lord ?

Dun. Simply, that he of Wold
Home going fell, hurt by the lightning-stroke,
At Mervyn gate. The Lady had him in :
She won his heart, he hers : they are betrothed.

Zeb. A jest ! Who said so ?

Dun. Only she herself,
And frankly too. Hither to-night I pressed her
To meet the King, and grace our feast, my suit
Urging the while ; when, with a serious sweetness,
She said she owed it to herself and me
To tell me at once she was the Lord Wold's bride.

Zeb. The end o' the world's upon us ! I've just seen

That springald Chayr : What think you, good my Lord?
 He's in the metamorphoses ! Last moon—
 A peck o' wild oats ; to-day—unbonnet you
 To The Whole Duty of Man ! So changed is he.
 Love for our Mervyn has transformed him thus.
 And here's my Silent Lord : Oh rare for Silence !
 If not just one o' your mere sheer war-clubs knotted
 And rude strength - gnarled, on whose outstanding
 knobs

Pity might hang herself in her own garters ;
 Yet who dreamt he could love ! when lo ! he melts,
 Woos, wins, all in a flash, as if said flash
 Had more than suppld our dull suitor's tongue,
 Wildering the maid's brain too.

Dun.

Sooth be the saying

Thunder bodes ill to Wold.

Zeb.

Ourselves will do

The thunder that we need. Now then for Wold :—
 We'll end this love of his, so end his line :
 For like your grave, deep, quiet men, he loves
 Once and no more. The lady—mark, my Lord—
 Is his betrothed ; but she's not yet his wife,
 No, nor shall ever be.

Dun.

Fix me but that !

Zeb. Thomas of Wold charged you with Gloster's
 murder

In presence of his captains, and compelled you
 To leave the army ?

Dun.

'S blood ! why do you name it ?

You had better tell me too, with twitting tongue,
 (And look for thanks), he—Wold—the man I hate
 Has robbed me of my love !

Zeb.

My Lord, that charge

Against you, was a charge against the King,

A foul, disloyal charge. He called it murder ;
 The King's a murderer then, for 'twas his will
 And work you did, as any faithful subject
 Was bound to do. Mark now : our Sovereign Sire
 Comes here to-night. You know, my Lord, his wrath
 At hearing Gloster named ?

Dun.

Well ?

Zeb.

Hereford

Is looking homeward from his banishment,
 An angry man. Him the King fears. Sworn friend
 To Wold is he. Richard is jealous too
 Of Wold's great service, and can never wish him,
 Quartering with Mervyn, to have more power still.
 My Lord of Dunley is his man for that.
 Let's draw all these converging points together,
 And knit them thus to our purpose :—When the King
 Is flushed with wine to-night, make bold, my Lord,
 Doing your duty as a right leal servant,
 To impeach Lord Wold with that disloyalty.
 I'll bear your Lordship out i'nt : I was present,
 I know it all—and more.

Dun. (pacing the court). Could this be done !

Zeb. It can be—must be—shall be. Nay, this farther :—
 You're bound, my Lord, as Mervyn's last male head,
 Not to allow that wedding—not to allow
 Your orphan cousin, an unshielded girl,
 Unpractised, trusting all, to wed a traitor.
 By Nature's laws you are her guardian friend ;
 Befriend her, then.

Dun.

I'll do it. To-night, you said ?

Zeb. This very night : all at one heat. Our Liege,
 Wroth about Gloster, and made prompt, by hints,
 To awe proud Hereford, by keeping down
 And humbling Wold, will straightway summon him

Into the presence : All this very night.
We'll have another thunder-clap.

Dun.

What then ?

What will Wold say or do ?

Zeb.

Down with his gagé,

Daring Lord Dunley. 'Twill'but aggravate
The King's displeasure : He hates gauntlets now.
It but remains to name Wold's punishment.

Dun. What should it be ?

Zeb.

Not one jot more than serves

Our purpose fully. But the King himself
Must seem to dictate, while we gently bend him
To what we wish. Say that Wold be confined
Within the limit of his own domain,
On pain of death to pass't. Doomed traitor he,
The King's command will give you yet your wife,
And Dunley shall be Mervyn. Thomas of Wold,
Struck thus, shall pine out of your way ; and then,
Wold's large domain, mark me, her lodes of ore,
Quarries of slate, forests, and fishy rivers,
Her hills of sheep, green plains, and fruitful fens,
Far and wide, shall be yours.

Trumpets without.

Dun.

The King ! Keep near me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—*A Chamber in Wold Castle.*

DUCHESS OF WOLD and LORD WOLD.

Duch. What words be these ? Ay, ay, their iron tongue,
Where day's safe covenants are all blotted out,
And the black jaws yawn, hungry to have us,
Tolls o' the Thing foregone ! Thomas of Wold,
What have you done ?

Wold. Quenched an old feud in peace,
And holy wedded love.

Duch. I wished thee wed ;
But be thy bride the worm, not she of Mervyn !
Think of thy father's blood shed by her father :
Oh, it cries fie on thee ! A love so rash,
So disproportioned, so unnatural,
Can't come to good !

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. This from the King in haste.
[*The Messenger gives a letter to LORD WOLD,
and retires.*

Wold. Leave from your Grace to read.
[*LORD WOLD opens and reads the letter.*

I'm summoned straight
To Dunley Tower, where the King spends the night.
Wherefore, is not set forth ; but the command
Is absolute. Give me your blessing, mother,
Lest I return not : Troublous times are near ;
The King may need me.

Duch. This I'll say, my son,
And bless thee for't :—For him, and for thy country,
A great far doer hast thou been—great things
Thou hast done, and yet wilt do ! [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Mouth of Afra's Cave.*

AFRA, striking her harp.

Afra. Cloud upon Wold, I see thee !
Well done, thou bellying blackness ! Leap on it,
Vengeance, with thy fierce feet ; tread down the gloom,

Till it be dense—tread down the burdened gloom,
 Till it be solid black on the doomed towers
 And battlements: There let it rest! Be all,
 Under that cloud symbolic, utter death!
 Shall it not be? Ay, for the Prophet spake,
 He looked into the seed of time and spake;
 And from of old I, Afra, was ordained
 His living Utterance o'er the House of Wold.

Hark! the Thunder-tongue hath knolled

Judgment to the House of Wold.

Mark! the love of enemies old

Folds in death the House of Wold.

[AFRA goes into her CAVE.]

SCENE II.—*The Aisle of Wold Church—lighted by a lamp. Rows of coffins are seen standing on trestles. LORD WOLD is discovered sitting by a coffin.*

Enter the DUCHESS OF WOLD.

Duch. Peace with the dead! All my life, morn and even,
 I've fed thee, lamp of love, with mine own hand,
 With odorous oil, and never let thee out.

[*The DUCHESS trims the lamp.*]

My time draws to an end: Who'll do this duty
 When I'm laid here, dust with our dust? No matter;
 Dark or light, we'll lie still (*observing LORD WOLD dimly*).

What thing art thou?

Wold. That's the word! Not a man, no more a man!

Duch. My Lord?

Wold. Nay, thus:—

[*He writes with his forefinger in the dust under the lamp.*]

Duch. "TRAITOR?"

Wold. Am I that, Madam?

Duch. What means all this, my Lord?

Wold. Did I not go,
Last night, in a right spirit to serve my King?
His countenance, as I passed into the presence,
Was dark against me. On my knee I knelt,
But, as I knelt, I was denounced a Traitor.

Duch. Wherefore? By whom?

Wold. By Dunley. Gloster's blood
Hurt us in France, discrediting our arms:
He was the murderer: Off I drove him from us.
Hence his revenge. Our Liege's heart and ear
Are his. Made bold thereby, he dares to charge me
With slanderous and disloyal imputations
Upon the King himself, weakening his sway in France;
Nay, more, with actual treason in abetting
The exiled Hereford (who was my friend
In earlier days) in plotting rebel mischief
Back on the English throne: Such was his charge
Against me there and then. Ay, and our Sire
Let the bought tongue of some cloak-brushing fellow
Wag vouch against me.

Duch. Back in Dunley's teeth
You hurled the lie?

Wold. What boots it that I did?
My scorn, my gage, my lie-defying challenge
Were very aggravations: Here am I
An outcast Traitor! pent in Wold's domain,
On pain of death to pass it!

Duch. Did King Richard
Pronounce that sentence?

Wold. Yes. And out o' their wine
Flushed faces rose against me, frowning against me
As angry as their reeling drunkenness
Would let them frown it: This was our King's Council!

The Council of the Majesty of England !
Convenient pocket tool, the King bears't with him
Where'er he goes. I' their winking, lipping wrath,
They ratified the sentence. Think of it !

Duch. Be calm, my Lord.

Wold. Calm, Madam ! am I not ?

But yet I think of it. I sought me here
Death's house, to get me patience from our dust ;
But oh, I think of it yet. This more, high Duchess :—
What right have I to bring my own disgrace
Within these honoured walls ? What right had they
To foist a branded Traitor on your house ?
Traitor, ay, that and more ! a weakling scorned,—
Packed by my King home to my mother's house,
As if I were a suckling, not a man
That might be dangerous near him !

Duch. 'Twas a credit
Vouchsafed you rather, that you'd bow submiss
To your Liege, like all your sires. Whate'er your doom,
Just in itself or not, it stands our law
Till it be cancelled.

Wold. I've reclaimed to him
Through Hugh de Valma : I demand just trial.

Enter MARTIN.

Mar. Help ! Help !

Wold. What is't ?

Mar. They've hanged Sir Hugh de Valma.

Wold. Who has dared ?

Mar. Richard. For yourself, my Lord,
Went the young Knight to plead. The King, incensed
At his presumption, sent out after him
Six fellows masked to overtake, and hang him
On the first tree. Two of them fell by his sword ;

But the rest beat him down, disarmed, and hanged him
On the great tree called the King's Oak. And there
He's hanging still.

Wold. Touch him not ! England's people
Shall come and look at him there : In troops I'll bring
them,

To look at him there—boys, virgins, matrons, men :
Good people all, look at him hanging there !
The gallant youth, so tender and so true !
My friend, and such a friend ! Ay, and who fought
For Richard so ! Look at him hanging there !
The King's Oak, said you ? A fit gallows, then :
Ominous be it to kings !

Duch. I won't believe
King Richard did it. I'll to him straight myself,
And learn the truth o't all.

Mar. Madam, he's off
To Ireland in hot haste : He's needed there.

[*Exit MARTIN.*]

Duch. He hang a young knight thus ? Never !

Wold. And when
This peopled isle have seen the horrible sight,
I'll cut him down myself ; ay, and I'll bury him
Beneath the tree—The King's Oak, that's the word—
I'll bury him there ; and o'er his dust I'll put
A monumental stone, and I'll inscribe it
To all times with the record
Of this most bloody and most tyrannous act :
Bear witness if I don't, Ghosts of my Fathers !
And bear me witness this,—if I avenge not
His blood, perish my name, and may I never
Lie with you here !

Duch. Go from this holy place !

Wold. Wrong-banished Hereford, I call thee home ;

King shalt thou be ! Your towers, Duchess of Wold,
See that you keep them well : 'tis in my vow
That I do strike at them too : rest will I not
Till ne'er one strength i' the land call Richard master.

Duch. These coffins ! dare you leave them, rebel-
hearted ?

Hear me !—the curse of each and every one
Of our far loyal line, that sleeps in them,
My curse with theirs, be on your going ! Go !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Court at Dunley Tower.*

Enter LORD DUNLEY and ZEBRA, meeting.

Dun. White nostril pants ! You've done it ?

Zeb. There he hangs !

Dun. Varlet ! he come betwixt my King and me,
Handling my name so !

Zeb. 'Twas a devil, though,
For fighting : Two of our fellows he struck dead,
Ere we could master him. At last we noosed him,
And tucked him up—hang there, Sir Hugh de Valma !
You rose in France : In England too you've risen
To this fair height !

*Enter a Servant. He gives letters to LORD DUNLEY, and
retires. DUNLEY reads them.*

Dun. Here's news ! Wait me here, Zebra.
The bearer, ho ! [Exit DUNLEY.]

Zeb. Martin would take my hint :
So then, if he has made Wold think Hugh's hanging
Was Richard's work, wrenched from his King for ever
Is that proud heart. And when our Liege has learnt,

As learn we'll make him, how his men's rash zeal
Dealt with Wold's friend, he'll feel all terms with Wold
Closed. Thus they're foes for life. That's one point
gained.

Re-enter LORD DUNLEY.

Dun. Here's Hereford back, and pushing for the
Throne :

The land's ablaze : Wold's out against the King.

Zeb. Wold out ?

Dun. What think you now ? Hot thanks he'll give us
For our device. An outer wheel is he,
Heavy, and black, and slow ; but what a world
Of clattering powers within, annexed to him,
His slightest move sets on !

Zeb. We strike for Richard ?

Dun. Our horses, there ! yes, yes. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A Court in Wold Castle.*

The DUCHESS OF WOLD and MOUNTNORRIS.

Duch. Those volunteers ?

Mount. They're promised us by Chayr :
He's steel : they'll come.

Duch. I trust they're not raw boys,
Unstiffened by deeds : mere gristles of service ?

Mount. Yeomen,
Tried all and true, proud for the Old Boar's sake
To man these walls.

Duch. Get them in. We'll be sieged.
What stores have we ? Get more : lay them in large,
That we may hold it out. Would we had here
Our blind old Minstrel and his daughter Rachel.
I wished them in for safety ; but the Harper

Preferred his forest cottage, thence to harp
 From place to place : skilful is he to touch
 The faithful popular heart. [*Exit* MOUNTNORRIS.]

Enter DR ROWTH.

How goes it, Father ?

Dr Rowth. Ill for the King. Too well for Hereford :
 He's Lancaster now, and will be more anon.
 Terrible things for him has Lord Wold done,
 Riding from sea to sea, quelling down all.

Duch. Where's Richard ?

Dr Rowth. Still in Ireland. Lionel Chayr
 (Sir Lionel now, for York has knighted him)
 Is the one man worth naming in his cause.
 The other day—a mere wild slip of a lad,
 To-day—more than a man,
 This unexpected and thrice-valiant youth,
 Loyal and true, what deeds has he not done !
 But all in vain : The Kingdom's ta'en from Richard,
 And given to another.

Duch. That a son of mine
 Should thus ride o'er his King's discrowned head !

Dr Rowth. Even were our King deposed, the Throne
 by right's
 Not Lancaster's ?

Duch. 'Twere countenance to rebellion
 To care one jot for that : If Principle
 Go down on its knees even once to Accident,
 Down with it once for all ! The unjust excess
 Is better for us, when reaction comes,
 Than moderate wrong. Yet is this sorry work :
 With blood for this, ay, dear shall England pay,
 When Right reviving shall war back on Might,
 Throned in the now usurping Lancaster. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*A Court before Barracks in Bristol.*

MICHAEL ZEBRA.

Zeb. Save you, Sirs, in Bristol ! Here we be ! After hunting us over those Welsh hills, here has that fellow Wold fairly fixed us at last. Ay, ay, the days of siege and of thin cakes are upon us. Cousin Mervyn's here, drawn hither to wait on her aunt, Lady Staines, who has been sick. The venerable Auntship hates Wold with all the old family hatred, wrinkled and envenomed by her own ninety years. Ours is she entire. Dunley might make something of that, but he can't be screwed up to the doing point. As for poor Richard, though he's at hand with twenty thousand men from Ireland, he'll melt away like a snail in the sun of Lancaster : He was not born to raise sieges. His style of reigning won't do : Everything's hollow—false—a Lie. The overblown bubble must burst ; hence Revolution, which is just the crack of an exploded Lie. Were I Wold now (for he has been scurvily used), I'd away with this Kingship for ever : I'd have everything down to the old turnip-eating plainness of my own Roman grandfathers : No plaited folds of favour, crimped and goffered by Ceremony, should be left to hide minions and panders in : No curled, scented villain should live on the stark naked level of the iron shield to which I would bring down all things. But I must back to Dunley, and keep him up with hopes of the King. We must lacker our fronts with daring, and hold out. [Exit.

Enter PHILIP DE VALMA.

Phil. Hanged like a dog ! My brother !
Yonder old beggar now, crooked and palsied,

Shaking all o'er with tatters, filth, and vermin,
And blear with rheum, look at him how he jerks
His red, raw, ulcerous, mortified pin of an arm,
Out of its linen bandage, tetter-stained,
Into the faces of the passers-by,
Chiefly if pregnant women, to enforce
Alms by disgust and fear : why he, and such as he,
Why reptile things, the vilest and most loathed,
Should be let live, ay, should be living now ;
And my poor brother should be done to death,
Oh, he so beautiful, so brave, so good,
I see not why : can any tell me why ?
But let me be a man : Where are we at ?
Here I'm shut in, then ; Thomas of Wold's without,
Out of my reach : ah me, should he escape me !
How oft I might have smote him ! Nay, how oft
I've touched his naked sleeping throat, in token
I had him sure ; and yet forbore, as if
I dallied in the luxury of my purpose !
Would I were near him now ! I've been a fool.
What boots it that my mind still runs upon
The bloody footsteps of things done of old,
Back, and far back away,
Tracking them like a sleuth-hound, and I see
The grisly shadows of my ancestors
Waving me to revenge, and every night
My mother's pale and ineffectual ghost ?
They've not yet stirred me up to do the deed.

Re-enter ZEBRA.

Zeb. De Valma here ! Have you, by any chance,
Seen my Lord Dunley ?

Phil. Villain ! O villain ! [*Grappling him.*]
If 'twas you did it ! If you knew o't, even !

Zeb. Are you drunk? mad? or both? You've drugged
yourself
With some of your insane liquors, eh?
What would you, then? What mean you? Pray, don't
gasp so,
Nor look so black i' the face. In Christian breath,
What is't?

Phil. My brother! hanged!

Zeb. Soho! that's it?
Now then, stand off. What do you take me for?
Am I that villain, eh, damned beyond fire?
Here's my bare breast—strike, and strike home, De Valma,
If you would kill your friend!

Phil. Who did it, then?

Zeb. Wold.

Phil. No: He loved the lad: He's forth to avenge him.

Zeb. All very pretty! True, he strung him not
With his own hand——

Phil. Oh!

Zeb. I forbear. But mark:—
Who thrust your brother on to brave the King,
Fearing to go himself? Wold, who but he?
What call you that? Granted, 'twas a base crew
O' the King's own grooms, miscounting it would please
him,

Followed and hanged Sir Hugh: That's not denied.
But who set on the mischief? Was't not Wold?

Phil. I knew not this before. Have at him now!

Zeb. Whom? Ah! I see. Philip, you don't love Wold?
You meditate mischief there?

Phil. How know you that?

Zeb. I've noted your strange eagerness around him.
But why not strike at once? Strike, and be done:
Be a man even in that; and not Wold's weasel,

Hanging for ever at his jugular vein.
Look ! in the waving of a midnight curtain,
I'd do it thus—'tis done ! But come now, tell me
Why you hate Wold. I hate him too. I'll help you.

Phil. You shan't. He's all mine own.

Zeb. Ho, ho ! you have
Monopoly there ? Well, man, don't tremble so,
Don't look so eager jealous ; I'll not touch
Your Wold, I swear.

Phil. My fathers were of Ireland.
There warred and ruled the Boar of Wold—his sires
Had done't before him cruelly. He humbled
Our house of fame—Darconnell's ancient house.
My father, deepliest grieved to have led and lost
His folk in vain for freedom—for the Boar
Quelled them, and sunk their heads in blood and fire—
Perished, self-slain. The stranger got our lands.
My mother to her native Italy
Fled with her boys, Hugh and myself ; and there
Heart-broken died she. We assumed her name.
Up there we grew. In me revenge grew up
Against Wold's house. Its state I learned, I learned
How fought its son in France : to France I went,
Taking young Hugh, and joined the English camp.
I need not tell you how we found you there,
Our fellow-townsmen, strong in English favour ;
Nor how, as my soul wished, good friends, through you,
Fixed me Wold's surgeon—near his helpless sleep !
For I was trained to healing. In his eye
My brother Hugh got a young soldier's post.
I might have smote Wold, might have drowned his heart
With lethargies, or simply touched his lips
With subtle drops—and let Death wipe his beard !
But somehow 'twas too easy. More than this,

Purely to kill him was not all I wished :
I wished his heart to bear and feel the load
Of retribution for ancestral crimes
Coming down heavy on his life and house,
With a long dark fall out of the times of old.
My scheme was not full-shaped, when my poor Hugh
Began to puzzle me in't : He knew it not ;
He knew not even the history of our house ;
So knew no cause to hate the Lord of Wold :
I kept the matter hid from him ; I took it
All on myself, keeping his young soul clear.
Upspringing like a pyramid of flame,
How towered that soul in war ! With zeal, with power,
With prowess all unparalleled, he Wold's life
Saved from a crush of foes bearing him down,
When mortal help seemed vain : Wold loved him thus :
And high of courtesy, plenteous of wit,
Music, and poetry, my brother grew
Closer and closer to the grave man's heart.
So what must I do now ? Perplexed was I.
'Twas there and then you left us, following Dunley.
War ceased in France. To England came we. Hugh
Went with Lord Wold to Wold. Hither I turned
To see a noted sage. But oh, what next ?
I've heard it all ! Zebra, I'm stricken sore !
I knew it would be thus ! Aye in mine ear
Were voices crying, " Sweep thy house, prepare,
Death is thy Guest ! " He perished so—my brother !
Wold, he the cause ! Forth, forth ! I'll do it now !

Zeb. Think of thy father, man, and cut his throat.
'Twill serve me too.

Phil. You shall not have one jot
Of what I do : Round and entire, the thing
Belongs to our house alone.

Zeb. Well, see you do it.

And there an end. Come to me then, the King
Patron shall be to your Philosopher's Stone.

Phil. Serve you the Court? I knew not this.

Zeb.

How could you?

When not i' the stars, with dim-eyed bearded Magi;
Or not i' the molten pot; or not i' the bowl,
With transcendental wassailers sublime,—
Your down-weighted heart, like a deep-laden waggon,
Weighed down with old black things, moves groaning on,
Heavily, slowly, groaning on, i' the deep
And narrow ruts of your progenitors,
Ploughed up by their inveterate wheels of usage,
And never mended since. Do but use, man,
Thine eyes, and see what a brave world's around thee,
With men and women in't. But you don't hear me?

Phil. God rest thee, my poor boy! Well, I must thank
him

That he did hide thee in the gracious earth
From horny ravens and death-smelling vultures,
And creatures crying in the stony desert
To tear and eat: No hungry cruel thing
Mangled thy comely body. But thou'rt gone
From this dead heart of mine with all thy love!

Zeb. Now then for work: I'll let you out: Come on,
And as we go, I'll show you how Wold stands
In Dunley's way, therefore in yours: So you
Must take him off: All our plans thus go well.

Phil. He shall die childless, and his house die with
him. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VI.—*The Camp of the Besiegers, before Bristol.*

LORD WOLD and HASTINGS.

Wold. We've Dunley penned!

Q

Hast. Now then for the assault !

Wold. My bride's in the city. Back her troth I gave
her,

When I became a rebel, and I prayed her
To weigh my fortunes well in their great change
Nor mix her life with mine ; but her true heart
More than renewed the trust. So doubly dear,
Would she were safe ! Dunley, at bay, twice wroth,
May do her hurt : Yet surely not. How think you ?
He dares not do it ?

Hast. Strike : Give him no time.

[*Exeunt.* And the trumpets are heard sounding
to the onset.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Mouth of Afra's Cave.*

AFRA, striking her harp.

Afra. Look out ! The Princes ride, the armies forth
In dreadful pageantry and far procession
Shake the embattled land, all to work out
The great Fulfilment.

Wold's in my Ring of Doom. Mervyn, with all
The bleeding strings of her derivative life,
Has hold far back upon the loins of Kings,
Out of the which she came ; but she's in too,
And so must die with Wold.

So sure are the weird words uttered o'er Wold,
Whoso is knit to him must die with Wold.

Stark and stern thy end shall be,
House of Pride and Cruelty !

[*AFRA goes into her Cave.*

SCENE II.—*In Bristol.*LORD WOLD *and* HASTINGS, *meeting.**Hast.* So then the kingdom's Henry's?*Wold.*

All save Wold.

Wearing out siege, repelling all assaults,
Blowing defiance from her battlements,
My mother still holds out: Wizards, nor Thunder,
Nor Bloody Aspects in the House of Life,
Have power to shake her: even unto the death
She'll hold it out, so great is she of heart.

Hast. Dunley?

Wold. Not caught. Forth with a desperate few
Dashed he when we took Bristol. Pausing ne'er,
Out after him I rode. I hunted hard,
But lost him in the hills.

Hast.

What's our next move?

Wold. We hold our camp outside the city walls
For two days more. On the third morn I take
The Lady Mervyn home—on my own way
To Wold, to strike it down; so runs the vow
That I have vowed. Were but my mother safe,
I sheathe my sword, and wed. I'm sick of blood.

[*Exeunt.*]SCENE III.—*Dunley Tower.*LORD DUNLEY *and* MICHAEL ZEBRA.

Dun. As if we were not mere life-loving vermin,
Wold-hunted to our hole here, he the while
Lord Bridegroom where I loved, wooed — failed!
Perdition!
Word me no words, look me no confident looks,

Till you're prepared to show me—can you show me
How I may baulk that marriage?

Zeb.

Yes.

Dun.

So bragged you

Of what the King would do when he came back
From Ireland with his host: Where's that host now?
Where he himself? His twenty thousand men
Are last year's snow. Himself lies fast in prison,
Kingdomless, hopeless. Can we give him hope,
We with our skulkers, our poor patch of serfs,
Driven to our hiding here? Nay, Wold, be sure,
Down on us whelming comes. What shall we do?
Can Italy's subtlest soul answer me there?

Zeb. Stand at bay, then.

Dun.

That's all? So you confess

Your shifts are ended now?

Zeb.

Good night, my Lord;

I'll do't, then.

Dun.

Hang yourself?

Zeb.

Bring Mervyn hither.

Having her here, we have a hank o'er Wold,
Should he with bold effrontery dare to siege us,
Whilst his own mother's holding out hard by
I' the self-same cause as we.

Dun.

Fine work for knights!

Zeb. Simply we'll make it seem Dame Staines has placed
Her niece with you in these distracted times,
As her next kinsman, to prevent that marriage
With a marked traitor. Lady Mervyn's young,
And there's the dignity of guardianship
In what you do. But wouldn't you stay, my Lord,
That wedding at all hazards?

Dun.

Bring her!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Court in Wold Castle.*

DUCHESS OF WOLD.

Duch. The world of dreams, the disarranged world,
With all its huddled rack of fantasies,
And topsy-turvy troubles, cannot show us
Anything stranger than this actual day.
Richard deposed ; Hereford all but crowned ;
Through all the realm thick crops of jealousies,
Hatred, strife, blood, confusion ! Even the Faith
Has lost its hold of men : Pestilent teachers,
Of no succession, and unconsecrate,
Scorning the Church's statutory furrows,
Sow their opinions broadcast o'er the land,
With torment-pointed threatenings harrowing in
The wild strange seed, seed in its after harvest
To fill the Arch-enemy's garners.
What wonder that the sympathetic heavens,
Coping this isle of mischief and of sorrow,
Hood us with prodigies ?
Two suns were seen at once ; black dews have fallen ;
And warning voices have been heard i' the air ;
The comet's unblest beard hangs in our skies ;
The stars are quenched i' the glare of fiery meteors ;
The vestal moon, lawlessly red and fierce,
Reels as if drunk with blood : These signs portend
Worse things to hap ; for out of holes o' the earth
Come lean-faced prophets, never seen before,
And read them so, whispering of chance and change,
The fall and death of kings.

Enter MOUNTNORRIS.

You've managed to communicate with Chayr ?

Mount. Himself was here : down i' the trees we met,
West o' the Castle.

Duch. Well?

Mount. We've fixed the day.
Out on the foe we rush. Chayr hears our trumpets,
Down on them comes he too. We'll beat them off.

Duch. One thorough rally here may yet re-act
Through all the land for Richard. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.—*A Rocky Glen in a Wood.* RACHEL,
gathering wild strawberries.

Enter SIR LIONEL CHAYR, *disguised, and in great haste.*

Chayr (listening). The enemy's after me still—what could have roused him? Ha! there's the cracking of dry twigs, too, at the head of the glen, before me. Some of them have got round upon me. Here's a natural cave of the rock, I'll bestow me here a while. But what have we now? (*observing* RACHEL). A woodland creature with her eye upon me. Come hither, damsel.

[RACHEL *advances to him.* CHAYR *takes her by the curls with both his hands.*

Look me full in the face—are you true?

Rach. I hope so.

Chayr. Do you know me?

Rach. No.

Chayr. I am Sir Lionel Chayr in disguise, one of King Richard's captains. The King's foes are out after me. My life is in your hand. You'll give me up to them for a price?

Rach. Trust me, gallant Sir, I would not do it.

Chayr. By your heart in your young face, No. I could trust you to the death. Here's some brush of ferns and ivy (*cutting them with his sword*). I'll into

this caverned cliff, and you'll cover up the entrance neatly and naturally. Hold—don't smile, till I paint your face with these strawberries.

[He takes strawberries from the girl's basket, and paints her face.]

Now the impudent soldiery won't see how fair you are: The better for you in these defenceless woods. Moreover, they'll take you for one weak of mind. Be so to them for the time, and parry their quest of me. Come back to me when they're fairly out o' the wood. Quick now, I hear them upon us. Cover me in, and then to your strawberry-gathering, with some simple song in your mouth.

[CHAYR goes into the Cave. RACHEL covers the entrance of it; and then retires out of sight, singing.]

Enter SOLDIERS.

1st Sold. He came this way, surely.

2d Sold. Look about among the rocks, here. He must be in some hole of hiding. Was it Chayr?

1st Sold. No doubt of it. He does all the difficult work himself. A straggler from our camp saw him part from old Mountnorris of the Castle, and gave the alarm. But here's one may help us. Hither, sweet-heart.

Enter RACHEL singing, with wild flowers in her hair.

Ah! the poor thing's wits are gone. But she's woman enough to paint her face, and deck her hair: The simplest of the sex knows the virtue of that.

2d Sold. Come, lass, you know that strawberries make your cheeks pretty; so you must know the value of white money. We're after one of King Henry's enemies. He's a young man in disguise, and came this way. Do,

now, show us where he is, and the Captain of the camp will fill your lap with crowns.

Rach. Pal-lal! Pal-lal!

2d Sold. (*taking out a coin*). You know what that is?

Rach. (*proffering her basket of strawberries, with a smile*). Pal-lal! Pal-lal!

1st Sold. Very fair, my good wench.

2d Sold. But won't do. Come.

[*Exeunt the SOLDIERS.*]

RACHEL listens and looks all around. She washes her face in a runnel, and takes the flowers out of her hair; and then strips the weeds off the mouth of the Cave.

CHAYR comes out.

Chayr. I heard it all, maiden. You have saved my life.

Let me bear your name on my heart.

Rach. Thy handmaid, Rachel, is the daughter of the blind old Minstrel of Wold, who dwells in the skirts of the forest. True is he to his King, and has sung the deeds of Sir Lionel Chayr. They call him the Loyal Harper.

Chayr. I've noted the gray harper. He has been A soldier in his youth—that I can see.

The old fire's there, as he stands up and holds,
Steady, his sightless orbs against the day,
Snuffing the battle. Loyal songs, too, he,
Self-risking, casts, precious seed, on the hard
And stony ground of this rebellious age.
Your King shall hear of you both.

Rach. You may go now.
The God of battles make you, heart and hand,
Strong for the King!

[*CHAYR takes off his bonnet to the girl, as she retires.*]

Chayr. Amen, sweet child of virtue !
The benediction of the unworldly Heavens
Be on your good young head ! [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE VI.—*Wold's Camp outside of Bristol.*

PHILIP DE VALMA.

Phil. Heart of hare I ! Wold lives. For aught I've
done,
I might be thankful for a rat to gnaw
The veins o' his neck.

Enter ZEBRA, disguised.

Zeb. The very man I sought !
But you've not cut his throat yet ? Well, no matter :
What serves't to take mere life ? Were he despatched,
You'd feel yourself a naked desolate being,
Wanting an object. Let's first kill his love,
And wait the rest, after his heart has been
Clean emptied out of joy : there's the thing for you !

Phil. Show me the way o't, then : Give me the means,
I'll take it from you now.

Zeb. For this I've sought thee,
Disguised so 'neath night's hood. One point achieved,
We pass from Richard's service to King Harry's.
I'll manage that. Philip shall pass from Wold,
And be the King's own man—his man of metals,
Starcraft, and so forth.

Phil. Mock not the awful power
To read the stars, the figures on the face
Of Fate's dark dial to the sons of men ;
To Wisdom's eyes foreshowing war and famine,
Plague, storm, and earthquake, and each stress of time.

Zeb. A truce to the stars just now ; save that we beg
them

To light us on our way, as we bear off
Mervyn to Dunley.

Phil. Ha?

Zeb. It must be done,
Or you and I are nothing. Can you show me
Thomas of Wold's handwriting?

Phil. Yes.

Zeb. I'll catch

The trick o't to a hair. The lady meant
To start at morn for Mervyn, Wold himself
Her guide and guard. Hark, boy, she starts to-night:
You see it now? We write her in Wold's name,
Urging her forth to-night, here in his camp
To wait the morn; with reasons given why safety
Demands this step, and why he—Wold himself—
Can't go into the town to have her forth.
You bear the note, second it, bring her out;
We pick her up, and straight with her to Dunley.

Phil. I who have loved all truth, am I to do
This practical lie?

Zeb. Ho! ho! you'd thither

(Pointing downward with his forefinger)

By only one of the Seven Deadly Sins?
None of the other coal-black, long-tailed six,
Foaming out tar, must yoke for you? Oh no!
Come, come, revenge! The thing's no more a lie
Than all your present smoothness round your victim.
He's your own now—you've caught him by the heart.
Aha! you're panting thick. Come on, my bird:
I have thee now. Let's to old Staines's house,
And do it there. She's ours. I've been with her.
She gives us leave to do whate'er we list;

What's more, she helps us in't, so we but stop
 Those hated nuptials. Lady Mervyn knows
 I'm here to-night : I've ta'en good care she know it.
 Means too I've found to make her fear a plot,
 This night in Bristol, hatched by Dunley's friends,
 Whilst he himself with a fresh host is coming
 Back on the city, bloody resolute
 That Wold she wed not. Lady Staines has promised
 To enforce these fears, and shape the way for us.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.—*A Room in LADY STAINES' House in Bristol.*

LADY MERVYN and BLANCHE.

Lady Mer. Zebra, Lord Dunley's man—what can it mean?—

Twice in our house has he been seen to-night.
 With a fresh force Dunley's at hand, they say ;
 And there's a plot to give him up the town,
 This very night. My aunt being now restored,
 Would we were hence !

Blanche. Those words of hers meant mischief.

We're in their net. Could we not go to-night ?

Lady Mer. Soft ! Some one comes.

MORLEY *brings in* PHILIP DE VALMA.

Phil. This from Lord Wold in haste.

[*Giving LADY MERVYN a letter, which she reads.*]

Lady Mer. You know its purport ? You are named therein

For service here.

Phil. To take you to his Lordship ?

Runs not the letter thus ? Dunley's at hand,

And Wold's close kept to be prepared for him :

Bad men are near you, Dunley's tools ; so must you
 Straight to Wold's camp, there to abide till morn.
 Home then he'll send you with a proper guard.
 My office as physician to our men
 In garrison here, and in the camp without,
 Lets me free out and in ; thus was I chosen
 To be your safest guide. Now, now ! Disguise.

Lady Mer. This is Sir Hugh de Valma's brother,
 Blanche,

That good young Knight of ours, so loved, so mourned ;
 We'll go with him.

Phil. . You loved him, did you ?

Quickly, or not at all ! Oh, not at all !

Lady Mer. How so ?

Phil. What did I say ? Oh yes—come, come.

'Twas just a moment's fear some evil thing

Might thwart us in't.

Lady Mer. A minute, and we're ready.

This way. You'll wait us at the garden gate.

Phil. (half inwardly). She loved the lad ! Me, me !

I'm damned for this ! | [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—*A Court in Wold Castle.*

The DUCHESS OF WOLD and MOUNTNORRIS.

Duch. Deal out the last o' the wine : bread for the push,
 See the men get : Spare not ; we'll have by sunset
 Fresh stores, our gates being free. Yonder's the dawn
 Curdling the east : go, take some rest, old man,
 You're not just made of iron ; 'twill prepare you
 For what you've yet to do.

Mount.

My gracious Lady,

I need no sleep.

Duch. Trumpeters on the towers,
Morning defiance, blow it loud and long.

(*The trumpets blow defiance.*)

Let's round and see the posts.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX.—*A Chamber in LADY STAINES' House
in Bristol.*

LADY STAINES is seen sitting up in bed.

Lady Staines. Good Wold, you're angry ; but we can't
help that.

Spell we've not used against you, blast nor ban,
Hot from the mystic synods of the night ;
Hags of strange seed, we've set not their weird hands
To gather the wild gourds of sin and death,
And shred them in your pot ; wrath we've not drawn
From evil stars to strike you : we've but done
As prudent parents do. Would I could sleep !

[*She lies down.*]

Enter MORLEY.

Mor. O Madam, where's the Lady Isabella ?
She can't be found.

Lady Staines. Aha ! Is the Wold there ?
Tell him from me,—To every wind of heaven,
Haste, send ye out. The shores and ocean isles,
Skirr ye them round. Through the city, too,
See that ye search : Do it with lighted candles :
Nothing but search ! You've found her, then ? Not yet.
You'll find her, though, at last—ay, soon enough !
Who's there ?

Mor. Thy servant, Madam.

Lady Staines. Put him out !
I know he's here : Hence, traitor

Mor. No one's here,
 Save thine own servant Morley.
Lady Staines. If I've sent her
 To Dunley Tower, to her good cousin's keeping,
 Who can say I've done wrong? Death, let me sleep!
Mor. That's the key now! Wold waits my coming forth,
 I'll to him with it: the full plot it opens,
 Which we so far had traced Philip the Leech
 And Zebra in—dark twain! Oh now to save
 That good young maid of Mervyn! [*Exit MORLEY.*]

SCENE X.—*Before LADY STAINES' House in Bristol.*

HASTINGS *waiting with an escort.*

Enter LORD WOLD. MORLEY is seen retiring.

Wold. Bid sound the march.

Hast. Whither?

Wold. To Wold: that first:
 Come death or worse the while, I'll do my vow.
 When Wold is fallen, then ho! for Dunley Tower.
 My bride is there in her false cousin's hands,
 Lured hence by some deep plot. Being there, she's in
 The deadliest danger.

Hast. March!

[*The trumpets blow, and they all march out.*]

SCENE XI.—*The Camp of the Besiegers of Wold.*

CAPTAIN *of the Besiegers* and an OFFICER.

Off. Wold Castle falls to-night?

Cap. I think it must.

Off. Pity for the old Duchess, and her Captain,
So tough and true ! They're of the right old breed.
Would they were on our side !

*[A trumpet blows from Wold Castle, another from a
neighbouring wood.]*

Cap. What's that ? Ha ! look,
They're sallying out on us. From yonder wood
Some foe is down on us, too ! To arms ! This way !
[Exeunt.]

SCENE XII.—*A Height, Wold Castle seen in the distance.*

Enter LORD WOLD, HASTINGS, and their troops.

Wold. Yonder's my father's house ! It shines as ne'er
I saw it shining : I could almost ken
My mother's head i' the light. What's yon strange lustre
An omen of ? How I do shudder, Hastings,
Lifting my hand against that sacred house !
Surely the grace of life is going from me.
Come on, let's do it quickly, what we do.

Alarms coming near.

What have we here ?

Some fugitives run by.

(Intercepting one of them.) Stay, sirrah, what's ado ?

Fug. The old sow of Wold is out on us on the one
side ; and that fiend incarnate, Chayr, is after us on the
other. In siege and assault we did our best, but the
terrible old Dowager has the day at last. Out of her way's
worth a life.
[The fugitive runs out.]

Further alarms.

Hast. Pell-mell on us, here they be.

Wold. Now then for work !
Back must we turn the battle ; else Wold stands,
And Dunley gets Chayr's help, my mother's too,
And baffles us.

[WOLD and HASTINGS, and their troops, march out.

SCENE XIII.—*Inside the Gate of Wold Castle.*

The DUCHESS OF WOLD, in armour, and with a sword in her hand, heading a small party of defence at the gate, is seen stretching out her arms toward the battle without.

Duch. The strength of angels ride upon your swords,
Ye men of might ; strike swift and far for Richard !

Enter RACHEL. She brings out her Father's head from beneath her mantle.

Whence, Rachel ? and what's this ?

Rach. Look at him, Madam !

Know you the face ?

Duch. Our minstrel ?

Rach. None but he ! [*Kissing the dead face.*

Duch. How came he by this death ?

Rach. We wandered east.

Your Harper harped : he stirred the people's hearts :
He sent them west to help Chayr's final push.
Too bold for his own safety, him the rebels
Took, slew, and set high on a market cross
This faithful head ! All night I sat below,
Keeping away from him the birds of air
And cruel things irreverent. Chayr had heard ;
Dash through the dawn he came, and brought me it down.

I bore it thence to bury it by my mother.
 Passing your gates, I saw the fighters fight.
 Free were the gates. I entered in. On you
 England's last loyal hope main rests. Self-stout,
 You need no buttress. Still this head I bring—
 Look at it—I do hold it up to you—
 Be nerved, be stouter still.

Enter SIR LIONEL CHAYR and other Officers.

Chayr. All's right, your Grace :
 The day is ours.

Duch. Thanks to the Lord of Battles !
 Welcome, brave Sirs ! At once to follow up
 This stroke determine we : Sup here to-night,
 And council hold.

Chayr (and the rest). In duty and in love
 We'll wait upon your Grace.

Enter a Herald.

Herald. Madam, I come
 In Henry's name, Henry the Fourth of England,
 (For Richard's fallen, and lies in Pomfret Castle)
 To summon your Grace : I summon you to surrender
 This Castle of Wold to Henry your liege lord.

*Enter MOUNTNORRIS, MARTIN, and a party of soldiers,
 bringing in LORD WOLD prisoner.*

Duch. We're doomed to death, of course, if we our
 Castle
 Surrender not—doomed like our murdered Minstrel ?
 Hold up that bloody head, fatherless maiden.

[RACHEL holds up her Father's head.]

R

Look at it, Sirs ! 'tis our old Minstrel's head,
 His murdered head. Through all my father's wars,
 A man of men, he fought, heart-knit to Wold.
 Him, white, blind, tuneful, Henry's ruffians butcher !
 But I'll avenge him !

Herald. Madam, I'm not charged
 Touching your lives.

Duch. Hence ! To thy so-called King
 Bear our defiance : We defy thee, traitor,
 Rebel, and regicide ! *[The Herald departs.*

Ay, regicide ;
 That too, be sure. Pontefract Castle, said he ?
 Or said he Berkeley Castle ? Call it Berkeley,
 And you scarce err. Go, and you'll see the ravens
 Already there, smelling the blood of kings,
 Hoarse croaking as they smell it, sailing low
 Around the fated towers of Pontefract.
 Berkeley rehearsed this Pontefract. O Sirs,
 Edward the Second's woful tragedy
 Is back on us afresh. Monstrous guilt thus,
 Surer than common crime, self-propagates.
 May Heaven strike in then, break, and stay at once
 This rank succession of king-killing murders !
 Stand forth, old man, what's this you bring us here ?

[To MOUNTNORRIS.

Mount. 'Twas not man's work to take him : Heaven's
 self did it.

Terrible was his course ; but his horse fell—
 Where, do you think ? On the sunk stone that marks,
 In Mervyn's bounds, where his own father perished,
 Stumbling it fell—even there ! Thus was he ta'en.

Duch. Our Minstrel's blood cries out for vengeance
 first :
 Vengeance we'll give him. More, far more, the plague

Of strange unnatural deeds (shame to our land !)
 With sternest hand we'll stay it if we can.
 Him there—rebellious traitor to his King,
 Caught quick in the hot act—rebel to nature,
 Warring against his mother's house and life—
 Seize, bear to prison : on the morrow have him
 Forth to our place of death ; there, where my sires
 Did doom on traitors, let the traitor die.
 Be it at noon. And, when the traitor dies,
 Let the death-bell of Wold toll out the tidings
 Far and wide round, that every rebel's heart
 May quail within him.

Chayr (kneeling). Madam, hear me plead,
 And hear these Captains with me : If we've done
 Your Grace and our liege King some little service,
 Spare the Lord Wold : we crave it on our knees.

Duch. No more of this. 'Tis sealed. What ! would
 you see

Our constituted England, pedigree'd old,
 Large of investiture, with chartered awe,
 Seat, jurisdiction, and prerogative,
 Levies and marts, unions and corporate guilds,
 Decline to individual savagery,
 And dig the waste for roots, that you do ask
 The evil thing not to be put away,
 And the curse out of her ? Mountnorris, you
 We charge with this : take that doomed man to prison ;
 And see him executed on the morrow,
 At noon precisely, as we've given the word,
 And as you'll answer for't. Hold ! take this sword—
 My father's—be it the fit instrument :
 Its greatest service shall be last, to strike
 Wold's last son through the heart, being a traitor :
 And let some arm that fought with the Old Boar

Strike the blow home to vindicate our house :
Be this the manner of the execution.
And when 'tis done, wipe not the sword, but hang it
Bloody up in the armoury of Wold,
To be a witness to all future times
Of this just judgment. See it done.

Mount. (*receiving the sword*). I will.

Chayr. Madam, one word before your Captain goes :
I ask but this,—instruct him to permit me
Entrance to-morrow, come what hour I may.

Duch. Our gates are open to Sir Lionel Chayr,
To come or go : bear that in mind, Mountnorris.

Mount. I will. Now then, Lord Wold.

[MOUNTNORRIS and Guards take out LORD WOLD.]

Duch. Our wounded first

Let's look to, then our dead. Keep near me, Rachel :
The chosen of our host shall go with you,
And bury that brave head, as your own heart
Would have it done. [Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Mouth of Afra's Cave.*

AFRA, striking her harp.

Afra. Feuds, bloody vows, ill-omened love, revenge,
Treason, rebellion, war, the staff of bread
Broken in the land, echoes of falling thrones,
Kings—Heard ye that? Wa ! Wa !
Twas the dull stroke of the brain-smiting axe :

See! see! they've staggered him — he's down — 'tis
Richard!

Yon son, yon mother, wrestling in their blood,
Behold them too! All this crowds thick upon us,
That the great Wizard's word, forth against Wold,
May have fulfilment. The Fulfilment's near.

[AFRA goes into her Cave.

SCENE II.—*A Banqueting Room in Wold Castle.*

The DUCHESS OF WOLD and an old Seneschal.

Duch. Where are the guests? We called them to our
council,
As well as banquet.

Sen. Madam, I suspect
They thought no congress would be here this night.

Duch. They thought! What right had they? Must
our Throned State
Lose for a matter in one private house?
Fill me a cup. [The Seneschal fills and presents it.
To Richard's restoration!

Death to his foes! Shame to his coward friends!

[She touches the cup with her lips, and sets it down.
Let's go. Let all these vessels stand. Lock up
This room for ever. The end comes. Nay, then,
Marshal me in Prophecy, Judgment, Doom:
There take your seats, ye Powers,
With Silence, and with Darkness, and the Ghosts
Of buried generations: Hold me here
Your undrawn table, since the mortal guests
Fear to come in!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Cell in Wold Prison.*

LORD WOLD.

Enter the DUCHESS OF WOLD.

As Priest of mine own house (for by the gate
Our holy Father fell), I offer you,
Being a dying man, our Church's rite
Of Preparation.

Wold (kneeling). On my knees I take it :
Proceed, in Jesu's name.

[The DUCHESS reads the Service for the Dying.]

Duch. Under just judgment,
Can I do aught for you, my Lord ?

Wold. No, Madam ;
Unless you let me forth at your men's head,
To save my dear young wife from Dunley's hands :
He has her in his Tower.

Duch. What ! let you smite
Richard's last bulwark ?

Wold. If you reason on't,
Oh then I'll urge it. Dunley's o'er to Henry,
Deserting Richard : Martin has been here
To wring my soul in death, and told me all.

Duch. False Dunley ! I feared this : he would not
help us.

Wold. He too caused hang De Valma, and the blame
On Richard laid. Ay, and he looks to Wold
As his own heirdom now ; nay more, my bride
Holds as his own, having her in sore straits.
Shall this be so ? Shall he, the base, bear off
Our ancient glories ? Madam, shall it be ?
It rests with you.

Duch. How so?

Wold. Waiving all this,
Hear my true plea :—Oh now for the dear sake
Of one who has given her whole young heart and life,
Her very self, so generously to me,
A grave, dull man, and of a hostile house,
By thy just soul, Madam, oh let me out ;
Let me but set her life and honour safe,
As if she were the simplest peasant's daughter !
That's all I ask—I ask no more but that.

Duch. It cannot be.

Wold. Hear, by your family pride :—
She raised me up, struck of the bolt of God :
No thought of the old feud ! no cold delay !
She took me in, she tended me herself
With Godlike pity in her gracious house,
Me, your own son, her foe ! Oh for one hour
Of freedom for her sake ! One little hour
Would do it all. Madam, as you are proud,
And scorn to owe your foes, you'll pay her back
Her generous service—save her life and honour,
And, to fill up and magnify the quittance,
Make me the instrument ?

Duch. The doom's pronounced.

Wold. Touch not the doom : Let the doom stand.
Stern quick

I'll do my work. Back here I'll be, and don
These chains again, before the sun be up.
The doom shall not be touched.

Duch. What guarantee
Have I for this?

Wold. I'm sure you'll ask no oath,
If I but pledge my word.

Duch. I meant not that.

But you may hold your blood cheap, and defraud
The judgment here.

Wold. Let me but forth ; I'll be
As chary of my blood, as hitherto
I've been unsparing o't : my life I'll guard
As a most precious thing, not mine, but yours ;
I'll bring it back to you. Then, see how much
Our mutual trust shall dignify the doom,—
Making and showing it no quick rash act,
But a calm sacrifice, due and full paid
To Wold's fixed will. Words then be done : I die.

Duch. Keeper, unlock : Lord Wold goes forth with me.
[*The Keeper unlocks the door, and they go out.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Room in Dunley Tower.*

LORD DUNLEY and MICHAEL ZEBRA.

Zeb. I've just seen Martin. 'Tis quite true. Thomas
of Wold dies at noon to-morrow.

Dun. Her Grace is the nether millstone ?

Zeb. Ay, but Chayr an imp of zeal. He'll be round
the earth ere a man can take his first sleep. I fear him
more than all the rest of them. He has admittance to
Wold Castle to-morrow, and is sure to bring some device
for the pardon or rescue of Lord Thomas.

Dun. Why not cut off his coming ?

Zeb. Martin and I have made bold to provide for it.
Gort is to be in the Long Wood before daybreak.

Dun. Accepted of Henry, our camp recruited, where's
the tongue dares wag against us ? [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—*Another Chamber in Dunley Tower.*

LADY MERVYN and BLANCHE.

Lady Mer. Poor child, your eyes are heavy, you must sleep.

Go, Blanche, I'd rather be alone : 'Tis fitting
I watch alone this one last night for him,
Since he must die to-morrow—as they tell us.
Would I were with him !

Blanche. Wake me, then, if aught
Alarm you in the night.

Lady Mer. They hold us here
By violent constraint. Whate'er they mean
Of further mischief, this they cannot do,—
They cannot turn my heart from Wold : Those hills
Round us, whose spurs are in the central fire,
Are not so steadfast as my virgin heart
Is to my own good lord. When he is gone,
For him I'll sit a widow all my days,
My few remaining days. Good-night, sweet Blanche !
[BLANCHE retires into a side chamber.]
Such is this life of ours : a glimmering light,
Seen through the ribs of Death !

Enter LORD DUNLEY.

What would you, Sir !

Dun. Fear me not, cousin.

Lady Mer. Cousin ? dare you use
That kindred name ? Be it so, then ! Oh be
My kinsman still ! I pray you, by the blood
That flows 'betwixt us, let me forth, and straight,

To see my lord—my own betrothèd husband !
 He's under doom of death ; and every law,
 Divine and human, calls on me to see him
 In his last hours. You dare not say me, No.

[*A trumpet and alarms without.*

Dun. It must be Wold !

Lady Mer. And he in prison ? Ay,
 And doomed to death ? Villain, you mean me wrong,
 Joining fraud thus to force ? That voice ! 'tis he !
 You're quailing now ! Come quickly, good Lord Wold !

*ZEBRA and PHILIP DE VALMA rush in on the one
 side, and BLANCHE on the other.*

Dun. What is't ?

Zeb. Wold.

Dun. Guard the Tower. Myself will meet him
 Down i' the camp. Mark :—Come he on to take
 Our Keep, I'm slain. Let ne'er this maid be his :
 Swear, Zebra.

Zeb. I do swear.

Dun. Guard the gate, then.

[*Exit DUNLEY, ZEBRA and PHILIP DE VALMA
 following him.*

Lady Mer. What see you, child ?

Blanche (looking out). Tumults confused of men
 Fighting this way and that, driven through the light
 And through the darkness : what a stormy drift
 Of hurrying shapes !

Lady Mer. (looking out too). But where's the Lord of
 Wold ?

He's here for me ! Oh look !

Blanche. Yes, yes, 'tis he !
 How he makes way ! What a majestic power !

Lady Mer. My own true lord !

Blanche. Ah ! he has disappeared.

Lady Mer. He's at the gate ! His men are at his back !

[Nearer tumults are heard within the Tower.]

What should we do ? I fear that villain Zebra,

Sworn o'er our lives. How near the tumult comes !

Let's venture forth. What think you ? Isn't it best ?

We may slip through. Could we but get beneath

Wold's arm, we're safe. Let's try. We'll muffle us up.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VI.—*The Inner Court of Dunley Tower.*

MOUNTNORRIS and a party are seen fighting against ZEBRA, PHILIP DE VALMA, and their men. PHILIP is made prisoner. MOUNTNORRIS presses hard upon ZEBRA. At this moment LADY MERVYN and BLANCHE, half disguised, try to slip past. ZEBRA, however, observes them.

Zeb. Not so fast, Madam.

[ZEBRA draws a small dagger from his waist, and aims a side blow at LADY MERVYN. MOUNTNORRIS intercepts it so far, but not before it wounds the lady slightly between the neck and shoulder.]

Phil. Wretch ! for this you made me
Anoint your blade ?

[MOUNTNORRIS disarms ZEBRA, and the men of Wold seize the Italian from behind.]

Mount. Down with the precious villains
To some deep place o' the Keep. There guard them fast.
Judgment shall have them. Let's support you, Lady,
Back to your room. Lord Wold will join you straight.

[MOUNTNORRIS supports LADY MERVYN on the one side, and BLANCHE does so on the other.]

The wound's not deep, I think.

Zeb. (as the Guards are taking him out with Philip).

No, but 'twill do:

Here's a quack-salver knows a thing or twain ;

He'll tell you, if that blade but taste the blood,

It drinks the whole heart up. *[Exeunt severally.]*

SCENE VII.—*Before the Main Gate of Dunley Tower.*

Parties go fighting over the ground.

Enter LORD WOLD and LORD DUNLEY, meeting.

Wold. I have thee now!

Dun. My tongue is in my sword.

[They fight. DUNLEY is transfixed, and falls.]

Dun. Oh, am I slain by thee? Zebra—remember—
[Dies.]

Enter MOUNTNORRIS.

Wold. Well met, my friend! How speed we? I have
spent

Too much o' my general care on this one point.

[Pointing to Dunley's body.]

Mount. They've fled. We've Dunley Tower. The
Lady's there.

Wold. Hold your men ready. We go back to Wold.
Is yon the dawn?

Mount. Not yet. You're hurt, my Lord ;
You bleed so.

Wold. Where? My arm? Why, what a gash!
Come to this tent, and bind it up for me.

I must not lose blood : I must run no risk

Of not being back at Wold by break of day. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VIII.—*A Cell in Dunley Tower, lighted
by a lamp.*

ZEBRA and PHILIP DE VALMA. DE VALMA *slumbering against the wall, ZEBRA pacing up and down the Cell.*

Phil. (starting up). Mercy ! me, me !

Zeb. Why, what a frenzy's this ?

Phil. Zebra, is't thou ? Is this the world of spirits
That we are in ?

Zeb. D'ye think to cheat yourself
Out of a fact so literal as the gallows,
And a hemp cord to hang thee by the throat ?
Is that a fact so vague as not to be
Sharp known when come to ?

Phil. Ah ! thou'rt Zebra still,
And we are still on earth : these jeers are heard
In the light upper time, and nowhere else.
But what a change on you ! you look like one
Tight-drawn and earnest for some terrible feat.

Zeb. Say you so, man ?

Phil. In that confused world,
Which I had swooned into, came a soft light,
And shaped itself into my brother's face,
Looking upon me with his candid eyes.
I tried to kiss him, but I could not. Then
The countenance waxed severe, and went from me
Back into night away, evanishing
In a thin haze of blood : So do I guess
My brother's angry that I've done the things
For which I'm here this night. I'm the last child
Of a lost house ! Me, the fell Dogs of Fate

Have hunted from my cradle ; and they'll bay me
 Down unto death, thrusting their very muzzles,
 Sharpened, drawn out with keenness, through the bars
 Of the Pale Gate, to catch at me ; the glare
 Of penal fires within, or the soft gleam
 Of creatures clad in light, striking the while
 Out on their haggard jaws, gnashing to have me !
 Could I delve back into the dark of time,
 And see from what foul root, be it of incest,
 Or bloody banquet, or what else is ranker
 In the abuse of nature, this strange crop
 Of judgments has grown up against our race !

Zeb. Of course, you lay on Fate, that black old scape-goat,

Your own heart-hunger after Thomas of Wold,
 Under whose thick tumultuous setting-on,
 Morn, noontide, night, you dogged his steps,
 Went where he went, still gazing on his face
 With eager look that seemed to ask an alms ;
 But ah ! could never strike—being carried past
 The sharp clear doing of the definite act,
 By the o'ercrowding and o'ermastering fulness
 Of the impulse that possessed you ?

Phil. Have I not struck ? Have I not reached him wholly ?
 Said you not so ? If not, I'll do it yet.

Zeb. Our day for that is past.

Phil.

Is't so ! Ah me !

Say you so utterly ? Is there no way
 To flee from this ? No hope ? Would the dread moment
 Were past, or never came ! What's the hour now ?

Zeb. Dial nor clock is here, save thy pale face :
 It goes to strike Despair. Let them come on,
 I'll laugh on their beards, and show them a neat trick.

Phil. What's death to thee, who car'st for nought beyond

The pang o' the moment? Pain with its keen feelers,
 Twigs of split nerves, and forkèd hairs of anguish,
 Being life's guardian, was not meant to be
 A trifling thing; but yet is it a trifle
 To blank obstruction, or that dread Hereafter
 For evil spirits. I was made to see,
 And tremble to the alarms of utmost nature,
 And——

Zeb. Need more of my gold? Is thy wine out?

[*A sound of turning bolts is heard.*]

But hark, they come. My pretty Imp of Death,
 Have thou the start o' them.

[*ZEBRA takes a phial from his bosom, drinks it off,
 and falls dead. Guards come in and take out
 PHILIP DE VALMA.*]

SCENE IX.—*A Chamber in Dunley Tower.*

LADY MERVYN *has fainted on a couch*, LORD WOLD and
 BLANCHE *are bending over her.*

Enter Guards with PHILIP DE VALMA.

Wold. Few words and no reproaches: Look, De Valma,
 How fares it with this lady; you can tell us?

Phil. She sleeps a deadly sleep: The wound is tainted.

Wold. That we know. Zebra dealt it. But the poison
 Was got from you. Have you an antidote?

Phil. Yes. Lord am I o'er all the powers I use.
 That tragic sleep, swooning away to death,
 I can unlock. But there's a mischief still:
 The poison's in the blood, there it has worked,
 But not long yet. Virtues have I to meet,
 Check it, and drive it out, if they be backed
 By hope and joy in the patient.

Wold.

Hope and joy —

Good lack ! But oh, let's try.

Phil.

No, Lord of Wold.

I'm a man that fears death. And, for that lady,
I wish her well ; she liked, and mourned my brother.
But die shall I, she too, ere thou be made
Lord of the joy of wedded life and issue.

Wold. Why this from thee ? No matter. Let's to
terms :—

I'm a doomed man : I die at noon. To Wold
You'll on with me, and help me by the way,
If I should faint, for I am hurt ; you'll see me
Safe given over to my mother's hands
For execution, see me die, and then
Be free to go your way. Undo me now
This venomous sleep.

Phil.

With my whole heart and soul !

I thought your doom reversed. But you must die !
Magnanimous though you be, I'll see you die !
And in your hour of death I'll tell your soul
Of Nemesis ! But to my office here :—
Wake, holy virgin !

Wold.

Hold ! 'twere merciful

To let her sleep till all is o'er with me.
My widowed wife ! Yet to her faith I owe it
To have her with me here all cognisant of
My last extremity. Wake her.

Phil.

Maiden good,

Glued in the numbing sleep, I thaw it thus,
And let thee forth. Lady, come forth.

[*PHILIP pours something from a phial into LADY
MERVYN'S lips, and she revives.*]

Lady Mer.

Where am I ?

Wold. Fear not, I'm here.

Lady Mer. Lord of my life, is't you?
Oh yes! I'm saved! But where's our enemy?

Wold. He'll never hurt thee more. To Mervyn now
I'll take thee home.

Lady Mer. Now then, the evil days
Are past, and we'll be glad! [Exeunt.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Mouth of Afra's cave.*

AFRA, striking her harp.

Afra. Wo for them going down! I see them down,
Far down the steep of shadows, to the dark
And swift-flowing Ferry of Sorrows!
The hour is come!

[*AFRA descends the Mountain in haste.*]

SCENE II.—*A Room in Mervyn Castle.*

LORD WOLD and LADY MERVYN.

Lady Mer. Oh yes, I'm better: Thank his powers of
healing!
Glad, active hope—well may it now be mine!—
Will do the rest, as the Leech says, and master
The virulent venom.

Wold. Yonder's the dawn now.
I must be gone.

Lady Mer. Trust me, 'tis not the dawn.
Rest till the morning break.

Wold. Farewell, my Isabella;
I'll soon get rest enough!

S

Lady Mer. Say you this sadly?
Ah me! What is't? There's something in your look! *
Wold. You're young, but just; and I must tell you
all :—

My life is forfeit; I go back to death :
My mother let me forth to set you safe;
But I'm her prisoner still, under death's seal :
I die at noon : And I must back to Wold
Ere the sun's up—such was the pledge I gave her.
Now then, true heart !

Lady Mer. Is it so, after all?
I'll with you, then, and plead upon my knees.

Wold. You cannot pass her gates : No child of Mervyn
Will she let in.

Lady Mer. Rags for me, Blanche !
I'll be a beggar, and get in. Once in,
I'll make her pardon you. Nay, speak me not ;
How can I live with this lethargic poison
Still in my heart, unless I conquer it
With hope and action? Said not the Leech so?
And will you kill me, then? I'll go, I will.

Wold. This is vain fondness, child.

Lady Mer. You shall not go,
I will not let you go. I'll call my guards.
I'll keep you prisoner here : You have slain my cousin
Dunley;
I'll make you answer for't : Your mother shall not have
you.
Ho, there! Ah me !

Wold. Look, yonder's the sun now
Thrusting his redness up the envious east.
I must be gone. Send me away, white soul,
I charge thee, now.

Lady Mer. Ay, you must go. Go, then !

[LADY MERVYN bows her head, and hides her face
with her hand, while LORD WOLD goes.

Is he gone? Blanche!

Enter BLANCHE.

Is he away? Oh yes.

[*They go to the window.*

Yonder he rides away in his old Roman faith!

The Leech is with him. Who's yon female form,

That runs before them with her loins girt up?

Blanche. 'Tis Afra of the Cave.

Lady Mer.

Yes, she it is.

Look how she strikes her harp! how her wild hair

Streams on the wind! She's like some Prophetess

Carried away on Judgment's whirlwind wings!

Blanche. They disappear down in the woody vale.

Enter RACHEL.

Rach. Out, Lady, with all your men to the Long Wood.
That way comes Sir Lionel Chayr, before the hour of
execution, bringing deliverance for the Lord of Wold.
But evil men are in the wood to intercept and slay him,
that Lord Wold may perish. With you it rests now to
save them both!

Lady Mer. How know you all this, Rachel?

Rach. From a dying man by our well, a trusted retain-
er of the Lord Dunley, wounded in that midnight
struggle, and creeping home to his mother's house: He
prayed me to give warning, and mar the wicked plot.

Lady Mer. I'll lead my men myself, and guard Chayr
through.

'Twill keep me alive. Nay, let me save great Wold,

I'll die content: O joy, could I but do it! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Main Gate of Wold Castle. The DUCHESS OF WOLD is seen walking on the battlements.*

Enter AFRA, running.

Afra. She-dragon, thou on high,
Walking alone there, terrible, look down :
Open your gates : He's here : Let in the man !

Enter LORD WOLD and PHILIP DE VALMA.

Duch. My Lord, the sun is in the eastern trees,

Wold. I'm here, my mother.

Duch. You've done well. Come in.

*[The gate is opened by one of the Guards of Wold, and
LORD WOLD and PHILIP DE VALMA go in.]*

Afra. Let me in, too. I'll to the tops o' the towers,
And look down on it all !

[AFRA is admitted, and the gate is shut.]

SCENE IV.—*The Long Wood—A Well.*

Enter SIR LIONEL CHAYR. He lets his horse taste the water and breathe a little, himself resting the while on the brink of the Well.

Chayr. We're near it now ! To save the good Lord
Wold,
And make that dear young one of Mervyn happy,
What wouldn't I do ! Would she had been my wife !
Well, well, she has chosen better. God be thanked
I've got thus far, and into day's safe light !
The anxiety of my purpose makes me jealous
Of all I meet : Not a hind coming up,
However trudgingly, but seems full bent

To bar my way : Not even a market-girl,
 But looks as if she'd brain me with her basket
 Of butter and honey : The dull ox is a bull
 To gore my horse, that I may not get on.
 Where's the sun now ? Would I could turn him back
 One hour on Mercy's dial ! But we'll do :
 He's a stage short yet of his half-way house.
 Come now, old Dickon, you must take me on.
 One pull more, boy, and if your good limbs save
 The Lord of Wold, we'll shoe you with gold shoes.
 What's better for you, man, we'll make you free
 O' the flowery meadows : ne'er another labour
 Shall you be tasked to. Come.

*[As CHAYR is about to mount his horse, GORT and
 his men rush in and attack him.]*

What's this, masters mine ? Oho ! have at you, then !

[They fight, and CHAYR is wounded deeply.]

Gort. Take care, lads, here's a rescue at hand ! Led
 on by an Amazon, too ! Tip me an arrow into her,
 Piercely, by way of Cupid's bolt ; and see you cleave the
 apple o' her heart. Quick, man, or we're undone !

[One of the party shoots out.]

*Enter LADY MERVYN with an arrow sticking in her
 waist, her men with her.*

Lady Mer. Strike home, friends. Heed not me.

Save, save that Knight,
 For he's on life or death !

*[LADY MERVYN'S men attack GORT's party, and
 drive them out, after killing GORT himself.]*

Chayr. Oh ! are you hurt, dear Lady ?
 Let me draw forth this arrow from your side.

Lady Mer. Let it alone, life might come out with it,
And I must not die yet : There's much to do.
Let's on to Wold. Have you deliverance ?
What are our own cheap lives ?—let's save Lord Wold !
Have you deliverance ?

Chayr. Yes.

Lady Mer. You bleed so, youth,
I fear you'll ne'er reach Wold. Can I not on
Before, with what of respite or of pardon
You bring with you ?

Chayr. They would not let you in.
Come on with me. This mars us wofully.
Stand still, O sun ! *[Exeunt the whole party.]*

SCENE V.—*A Court in Wold Castle, before the Prison.*

LORD WOLD *is brought out bareheaded by MOUNT-NORRIS and a party of soldiers, PHILIP DE VALMA with them.*

Mount. The sun is touching noon. On to the place
Of execution.

[A Dead March—the party file slowly out.]

SCENE VI.—*Outside the Gate of Wold Castle.*

*Enter LADY MERVYN and CHAYR. LADY MERVYN'S
men pause behind.*

Chayr. Here's water, I must drink ! Guards there,
you're charged
To let me in ; open the gate, this Lady
Will act for me : I'm faint. This letter, Madam,
Bear to her Grace : Quick, 'tis deliverance.

She'll yield to it. If not, plead, plead yourself.
Lose not a moment more. Men, help her on.

[LADY MERVYN is admitted.

I'll follow—if I can. Merciful water!

[CHAYR sinks down at a spring and drinks.

SCENE VII.—*An Apartment in Wold Castle.*

*The DUCHESS OF WOLD and JANET MOUNTNORRIS
making grave-clothes.*

Duch. (rising). His shroud is ready.

*Enter LADY MERVYN, and falls on her knees
before the DUCHESS.*

Lady Mer.

Stay the execution!

This for your Grace! Oh read!

Duch.

The King's own seal!

[*The DUCHESS takes the letter from LADY MERVYN, opens the seal, and reads as follows: "Cousin and Sister of Wold—By the premature grayness of this hair of ours, a lock of which is herewith sent thee, as the last token in our power of our affection for the most heroic and devoted of all our friends, we command thee to spare and love thy son, whom we forgive and purge of treason, and to let him marry the Lady Isabella of Mervyn. The gallant Sir Lionel Chayr bears this our message, and we commend him to your Grace.*

RICHARD."

Duch. Pledge how revered!

[*The DUCHESS puts the lock of hair in her bosom.*

Lady Mer.

Oh, do you spare him, then?

He's out to execution.

Duch.

Hie thee, Janet,

With this my ring : Mountnorris knows it : Tell him
The execution's stopped : Summon him hither.

[*The DUCHESS gives JANET her ring, and the
damsel hastes out.*

Who are you that plead thus ?

Lady Mer. Fain would I say, Your Daughter !

Duch. King Richard's will is law, the more since he's
brought low.

Rise, child.

[*The DUCHESS raises LADY MERVYN and kisses her.*

Lady Mer. My mother !

[*The Dead-bell of Wold tolls. A piercing
cry is heard from JANET.*

Duch. We're too late !

Lady Mer. No, no !

[*LADY MERVYN rushes out.*

The DUCHESS OF WOLD retires slowly.

SCENE VIII.—*The Place of Execution in Wold.*

PHILIP DE VALMA, MOUNTNORRIS, and SOLDIERS.

*LORD WOLD is seen lying on the ground in his blood;
a grim old soldier holding the bloody sword that
transfixed him.*

*LADY MERVYN rushes in, and kneels by LORD WOLD'S
dead body.*

Lady Mer. Stay for me, my dear Lord, I'm coming
with you ! [*Dies.*

Phil. (aside). Would I myself had smote him !

Yet what a pair ! goodlier was never laid
Down with the worm ! Both of them loved my brother ;
They should have lived for that. I think they should :
There was no blood in that, no flavour of death.

Might they but live ! But 'twas not written so
In the Old Dateless Book.

Enter SIR LIONEL CHAYR, leaning on a spear.

Chayr. Is this the deliverance
I struggled for to the death ? O evil day !
And she's there, too ? Beautiful child of Mervyn,
I'll look at thee once more : 'Tis a sweet face !
Bear in these bodies. [*A trumpet is heard at the gate.*
Hold ! [*The trumpet blows again.*
'Tis a bold note !

Enter the DUCHESS OF WOLD.

Duch. What summoner's that ?
Chayr. 'Tis Henry's blast, methinks.
Duch. Would that it were ! we'd show him, then—
But first,
Take in that body.
Chayr. Oh look, Madam—bodies.
Duch. Bodies ? How so ?
Chayr. Lord Wold, and his young bride.
She, too, is dead ; slain, bringing help to him.
Angel of duty ! Rarest of God's creatures
In this sore world of ours ! The strength, the strength
Of a wife's love, determined not to die
Till she had done the very last for him,
That, and nought else but that, could have sustained her
Up to this moment, with that fatal arrow
Buried in her dear side : Wo worth the day !
Had I not been waylaid by evil men,
All had been well.

The trumpet blows again at the gate.

Duch. Draw off, Mountnorris : Scorn them : Keep the gate.

We'll see the bodies in, then join you forthwith.

[MOUNTNORRIS *draws off his men.*

More alarms.

Phil. (aside). 'Tis Henry : I'll to the gate : were he but in !

Would I could help him in ! Dame Wold has struck My heart's own prey, her son ; would I could conquer His conqueror then, ending their house at once,

By letting Henry in ! Darconnell thus

Would have his heel upon Wold's neck—for ever !

Shadows, dread Ones, be near me ! [Exit PHILIP.

Louder alarms are heard.

Afra (seen standing on the topmost tower). Wo ! wo ! wo !

A Soldier comes running in.

Sold. Treason ! treason ! treason !

Duch. Out with it, sirrah !

Sold. A force from the new King demanded entrance—

Duch. And were denied ?—defied ?

Sold. They're in then, Madam,

And masters here : Martin was by the gate,

And let them in.

Duch. The traitor ! bring him hither.

Sold. Mountnorris slew him. One they called The Leech

Sprung on, and helped the opening of the gate ;

Him too Mountnorris smote, and trampled down.

Duch. What have we here ?

Enter HENRY IV., HASTINGS, and Captains.

Henry. Where's my renowned brother,
Thomas of Wold?

Duch. What would you with the dead?
[*Pointing to the body.*]

Henry. I am too late, then?—though I spurred to save
him,
Being told by Hastings of his danger here
Within your cruel gripe.

Duch. No, not too late
To take thy lesson from that stricken man :
Blood-stained Usurper, learn the Avenging Powers ;
Nor dare to touch, with further hands of guilt,
King Richard's life !

Henry. Woman of blood yourself,
You do interpret me from your own heart.

Chayr. Save him, then, good my Lord ! Grim threat-
ening faces
Are round about him. I beheld them there,
When I last night prayed for, and gained admittance
To Pomfret Castle. On my knees I begged him
To interpose, and get Lord Wold's life spared.
Then when he took my borrowed sword, and sheared
A lock with it from his head already gray,
To send in his letter on with me to Wold—
Token that he forgave with all his heart
Lord Wold, his foeman, and would have him spared—
He told me, smiling sweetly, he could wish
That sword for his bed-fellow there. I craved to stay
And guard his life. He pushed me out : " Spur, spur
For Wold !" he said. But first he made me promise
To stand to the death by his heroic sister,

The faithful woman of Wold : His bosom heaved,
 As if 'twould burst, and tears ran down his cheeks,
 Speaking of all that she had done for him,
 Despite his own harsh usage of her house.
 My King ! how kingly still !

Enter a Gentleman in haste.

Gent. Woful news, Madam !
 King Richard's murdered. Woful though it be,
 I thought it dutiful to post, that you,
 His last best friend in England's kingdom wide,
 Might know it straight.

Henry. My soul abhors the deed :
 It makes me heavy sad.

*[The DUCHESS OF WOLD turns in silence, as
 if to depart.]*

Duch. My King !—My Son !

[She falls beside her son, kisses him, and dies.]

Chayr. Burst is that great true heart : Good-night to
 Wold.

*[KING HENRY and the rest bow their heads
 toward the Dead.]*

Afra (on high).—THE END OF WOLD !

*[AFRA strikes her harp solemnly, and the
 Scene closes.]*

THE YOUNG PHYSICIAN.

"WHAT woodland depths of soft blue filmy gloom !
 Up to your easel, truant ! And we'll go
 Down by the Wells of Weary, and we'll watch
 Gloaming come on : How sweet the dewy dark,
 The lapse of waters gurgling by unseen,
 The sighing night-wind, and soft-swaying trees !
 In the soft-swaying trees sleep the peace-folded doves.
 Up, idle Hal ! You smile, but shake the head ?
 Lie, then, and list !" From fever's fiery gulf
 Redeemed he lay, pale, with a gentle smile.
 And wise to touch his sympathetic heart
 With lively promptings of the pictured year,
 Pastime, and Art he loved so, to her lute
 The damsel sung : thus sung the sister-twin :—

Sport on the ice his ringing revel keeps :
 Curve he sweeps,
 Curve he sweeps,
 Harry, how his curve he sweeps !
 The tumult booms
 Through Echo's rooms,
 Confused among the craggy steeps.

Breezes blowing,
Cloudland going,
Airy cloudland opening, going—
Line how fine is Harry throwing,
Throwing on the waters flowing !

Bloom of the May, smell of the May,
How sweet from thee, our dear old Thorn !
To the bold Thrush, on thy top spray,
Tremble the drops of morn.
The sister lilies naked in their dew,
Out with a flash the brook
From her sleeping pool in the bashful nook,
Yon hanging woods, yon crystal blue,
How fresh of the young day !
Vassal to Beauty, Thrush, with you,
Hal and I we pipe the May.

Painter to Most Gracious Me,
Hit it off so bold and free :—
Love has crosses.
How she tosses
All her tangled locks about,
All her taking graces out !
Kate, with her airs of grand disdain,
Makes hay at her neglecting swain.

Bay of the lake, our little cup,
The flowery sward has rimmed it sweet.
Over it dips the Doe her feet,
That drinking Doe : a shadowy Doe
Is floating in the greening flow,
Lipping up, liping up.
Limner, oh for the double Doe !

Dash with fire the flakes of Morn.
Drowse sultry dim the palpitating Noon.
What lucid beauty tips her virgin horn ;
Touch sweet of hope yon crescent Moon !

But what of the chisel? Up, more than snare
With the sweet blue pleasure of eyes divine :
Be the marbles of symmetry thine,
Set in elysian air.

Tallyho ! To the cry our crags on high,
Thickets and crags, reply, reply.
Down what a burst of hound and horn !
Engulfed it sinks : List ! down the glen unshorn,
The muffled echoes down, far flying, dying, die.

Here be favours of the sun :
Here the apple, red and yellow ;
Purple plum, with film of hoar ;
Pear, delicious cold of pore ;
Here the grape, divinely mellow.
Taste we now : The Song is done.

Soothed by the Song, he slept. Long was the sleep,
And deep of dewy healing. When he woke,
His eye new-glistened from the fount of life.
And from her own true heart, so thankful glad,
The Young Physician had her fitting fee.

MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

OH rise, and sit in soft attire !
Wait but to know my soul's desire !
I'd call thee back to earthly days,
To cheer thee in a thousand ways !
Ask but this heart for monument,
And mine shall be a large content !

A crown of brightest stars to thee !
How did thy spirit wait for me,
And nurse thy waning light, in faith
That I would stand 'twixt thee and death !
Then tarry on thy bowing shore,
Till I have asked thy sorrows o'er !

I came not, and I cry to save
Thy life from the forgetful grave
One day, that I may well declare
How I have thought of all thy care,
And love thee more than I have done,
And make thy days with gladness run.

I'd tell thee where my youth has been,
Of perils past, of glories seen ;
I'd tell thee all my youth has done,
And ask of things to choose and shun.
And smile at all thy needless fears,
But bow before thy solemn tears.

Come, walk with me, and see fair earth,
And men's glad ways ; and join their mirth !
Ah me ! is this a bitter jest ?
What right have I to break thy rest ?
Well hast thou done thy worldly task,
Nothing hast thou of me to ask.

Men wonder till I pass away,
They think not but of useless clay :
Alas for Age, that this should be !
But I have other thoughts of thee ;
And I would wade thy dusty grave,
To kiss the head I cannot save.

Oh for life's power, that I might see
Thy visage swelling to be free !
Come near, oh burst that earthy cloud,
And meet me, meet me, lowly bowed !
Alas ! in corded stiffness pent,
Darkly I guess thy lineament.

I might have lived, thou still on earth,
Like one to thee of alien birth,
Mother ; but now that thou art gone,
I feel as in the world alone :
The wind which lifts the streaming tree,
The skies seem cold and strange to me :

T

I feel a hand untwist the chain
Of all thy lovè, with shivering pain,
From round my heart : This bosom's bare,
And less than wonted life is there.
Ay, well indeed it may be so !
And well for thee my tears may flow !

Because that I of thee was part,
Made of the blood-drops of thy heart ;
My birth I from thy body drew,
And I upon thy bosom grew ;
Thy life was set my life upon ;
And I was thine, and not my own.

Because I know there is not one
To think of me as thou hast done,
From morn till star-light, year by year :
For me thy smile repaid thy tear ;
And fears for me, and no reproof,
When once I dared to stand aloof !

My punishment, that I was far
When God unloosed thy weary star !
My name was in thy faintest breath,
And I was in thy dream of death ;
And well I know what raised thy head,
When came the mourner's muffled tread !

Alas ! I cannot tell thee now
I could not come to hold thy brow.
And wealth is late, nor aught I've won
Were worth to hear thee call thy son
In that dark hour when bands remove,
And none are named but names of love.

Alas for me, I missed that hour !
My hands for this shall miss their power ;
For thee, the sun, and dew, and rain,
Shall ne'er unbind thy grave again,
Nor let thee up the light to see,
Nor let thee up to be with me !

Yet sweet thy rest from care and strife,
And many pains that hurt thy life !
Turn to thy God—and blame thy son—
To give thee more than I have done :
Thou God, with joy beyond all years,
Fill up the channels of her tears !—

Thou car'st not now for soft attire,
Yet wilt thou hear my soul's desire ;
To earth I dare not call thee more,
But speak from off thy awful shore :
Oh ask this heart for monument,
And mine shall be a large content !

FLOWERS
OF
THE OLD SCOTTISH THISTLE.

Flower the First: Maid Marion.

Look in and fear not, yet with reverence look ;
Silent and dark, but holy is the place :
Enter the cave : Here lies Maid Marion's dust.
An orphan only child, whose sire, the friend
Of Wallace, fell, what time our Champion led
The Fatherland unconquered to the stress
Of that long wrestle for our future peace,
She drew romantic daring from the time,
And loved Sir William with a patriot love.

Dark days fell on our Man : his hunted head,
A price thereon, lay in the caves of earth ;
But he had pressed her dying father's hand,
In wordless answer to his murmured prayer,
That he would be a guardian to his child.
And was he not ? In all his darkest days,
Betide what might, he to young Marion came,
And cheered the orphan in her lonely home.
Then drew he to this cave, not distant far,
For foes were round about him, and the maid

Brought food to him by night, and every morn,
 A young-eyed sentinel o'er his going forth,
 Hovering she guarded him from danger near.

But Treachery took him; and that stately head
 Of golden locks redundant, that so oft
 O'er War's wild surf, the day-star of our hope,
 Fulgent for us had risen, was trailed in dust
 Dishonoured to the death : Through all the throng
 Of that vast city, and through all those guards,
 Young Marion burst—she burst : low bowing down,
 She took and she held up that sacred head,
 To keep it from the dust, and kissed him oft ;
 And no man had the power to trouble her.
 She saw him die : she bore his latest breath
 Shaped in a message to the Bruce ; though brief,
 The seed and pregnant germ of Bannockburn,
 And all the issues of that mighty day.

But sorrow now had touched the damsel's brain
 To wildness, wandering o'er the Scottish hills.
 And ever, when the annual eve came round
 On which the Chieftain was betrayed, in calm
 Or tempest, round the dwelling of Monteith,
 Was heard the voice of her prophetic doom,
 All through the night ; and oft his way she crossed ;
 And oft she hung and hovered o'er his path,
 Giving his blasted name to infamy,
 The avenging spirit of all future time.
 And round the land she went, with many a song
 Of old heroic days rousing the youth
 To arms ; nor vainly, for, where'er she went,
 The people loved her reverently, for all
 She did for Wallace, for her beauty rare,
 Her ancient lineage and her lot forlorn :
 The ploughman left his plough, the smith his forge,

Down came the plaided shepherd at her call,
 Grave from the sabbath of the mountain-top,
 All to work out the great deliverance.

Bruce rose triumphant : Round his camps and fields
 Hung the wild lass, a Spirit of the war ;
 And aye when victory came, she clapped her hands,
 And cried aloud, " Wallace has done it all !"
 Then sought the wounded ; and, by day and night,
 Who like Maid Marion was their minister ?
 The beauteous maniac flitted through the field
 Of Bannockburn ; but, as the battle ceased,
 A random arrow pierced her virgin breast.
 They told the Bruce : down from his charger sprung
 The good King Robert, and his bloody brow
 Wiping, he bowed him o'er the dying maid,
 And pressed her hand, in token he would do
 Her last request—for now her soul was clear.
 " The work is finished ! " with a smile she said,
 Then told her wish ; and, faithful to her wish,
 King Robert buried her within this cave,
 Where Wallace oft had laid his patriot head.

Flower the Second : Maude of Raventree.

Behold, behold, from out the shadowy Past
 Our Scottish fathers start ! They start, they come
 With onward eyes, around their lifted heads
 A troubled glory, as they fight and sing
 Their stormful way across the stage of time !

The only scion of an ancient stock,
 A playful child was Maude of Raventree.

Her parents died. The dignity sedate
 Of orphanhood, a law unto itself,
 Fell on the sportive girl, a dignity
 More than of ancestry; and now she saw,
 Sportive no more, in every sunny joy
 Central a shadow stand, dark, yet to eyes
 Thoughtful and true an Angel in the Sun.
 And fair to look upon, and full of grace,
 The virgin grew to perfect womanhood.

The Forest Chieftain, lion-hearted youth,
 Swift as the roe, his eye the eagle's eye
 That drinks the sun, has won Maude's heart and troth.
 But ah! he fell in battle as he swept
 The Scottish Border of the English foe,
 Chasing them south. Down on him closed her heart,
 And loved no more, though many a gallant sought
 The orphan heiress of old Raventree.

Long in her lonely house the widowed maid
 Mourned for her knight, nor cared to see the sun.
 A change came o'er her: the unpeopled moors
 Were now her haunt, caves in the fretted shores,
 Tops of the hills; by sullen tarns she sate;
 She trode the dun-brown sheddings of the pine,
 Far in the forest's central solitude;
 And held communion with the desert storms.
 But strong and just of heart, the selfishness
 Of sorrow left her; by her liberal arts
 Bloomed the wide valleys, for the poor she lived,
 And blessings fell on Maude of Raventree.

Dark in its cloud of troubles vacant stood
 The Scottish Throne: Edward of England strove
 By fraud and force to seize it as his own.
 The sorrow then of Maude's bereavement grew
 Hate of the oppressor, and an active power

Sustaining Scotland. She the deeds had learnt
 Of patriot heroes old, men whose great hearts
 Come beating audibly down the centuries :
 These were her ancestry of thought and act.
 Behind her footsteps, wheresoe'er she trode
 The faithful soil, upstarted men of war
 Harnessed for battle. Patriot songs from her
 The harpers took and harped them o'er the land,
 Nerving the people's heart—for when disjointed
 Jealous her nobles stood, her humbler sons
 Held Scotland up. To help them went the wealth
 Of Raventree ; and all its vales were filled
 With orphan children who had lost in war
 Their fathers for their country : they in Maude
 More than a parent found. And oft to her,
 In their dark days, came Wallace and the Bruce
 For refuge and for counsel ; such a soul
 Of largest wisdom filled her age revered.

Outflies the Orphan Banner at the gate
 Of Raventree, adown the summer wind
 Far floating black, wrought by her orphan girls
 Of needlework, to Maude's designing mind,
 With Scotland's old emblazonries, with sense
 Of wrongs indignant tissued as they wrought,
 With murmured blessings tissued, patriot prayers,
 And patriot hopes, nor wanting orphan tears
 Dropping to consecrate the burdened web—
 Orphans of men who fell in Scotland's cause.
 Outflies the Orphan Banner from Maude's hand,
 Still stately in her venerable age,
 Passed to a chosen youth, central of seven,
 The standard-bearers of the Orphan Band,
 A hundred youths in all, all orphans, all
 Brought up by Raventree, a sable Band

For fathers slain. With lifted eyes, her hands
 Outstretched in prayer, the mother of them all
 Blesses the Banner ; and an orphan choir
 Of little ones, with voices clear and sweet,
 Take up the blessing, singing as they bless
 The Banner on :—With England's banded power
 Edward the Second comes, to quell and crush
 Scotland for ever : Banner, go thou on !
 Bear up the Bruce, thou of devotion deep
 Symbol peculiar, worth a thousand spears !
 Lead thou his van—lead on the people—meet,
 Defy the foe ; fling blackness in his face,
 Terror and death : and God be with the Right !
 Down the long valley go the Orphan Band,
 One heart, one solid tramp, one lifted whole,
 Deliberate, black, to martial music set
 Of indignation, and slow-breathed resolve ;
 And all the people bless them as they go.
 Far down the vale the music dies away,
 And far away the lessening Blackness dies.

Soft falls the summer eve on Raventree.
 High on the tops, clear seen, of all the hills
 The people stand and look ; and in the vale
 Old men in groups with wondering children stand ;
 Mothers the while, with infants in their arms,
 Restless from house to house—for all day long
 The buzzing rumour of The Battle fought
 Has filled the valley : how the rumour came,
 And what The Battle's issue, none can tell.
 Before her waiting gate, serenely calm,
 Sits Lady Maude. Dim are her eyes with age ;
 But damsels with her, one on either side,
 Stand, looking down the vale with clear young eyes,
 To ken some comer from the Scottish war.

Far in the sunny softness they descry
 A Blackness shape itself: "They come, they come!"
 The music comes, the Banner comes, the Band—
 Ah! smaller now than when it went away.
 And all the folk come running down the hills,
 And round the Band the shouting people come.
 On to the Lady's ear and heart the news
 Is BANNOCKBURN. With Heavenward face she rose,
 Silent a while, then stretched her arms and spake:—
 "Great day for Scotland! Down the Unborn Time
 I see arise the mighty tops of things,
 Seed of our Day august! Around their heads
 A liberal atmosphere, serenely glad,
 Unhurt, not hurting, Scotland's men shall walk
 With lifted faces to the end of time.
 Joy for all this! Yet oh, far more than this,
 Quelling the oppressor, raising up the opprest,
 Down through all days our Bannockburn shall be
 The watchword and the freedom of the world.
 The Lord our God hath done it! For ourselves
 Be special thanks: let us bow down and thank
 The God of Battles and of Victory,
 Him who hath saved our country—now our own!"
 Saying, she kneels: before her, with her kneel,
 Their conquering Banner lowered in the dust,
 Her Orphan soldier-sons; down, young and old,
 The people kneel; a mouth for all, she thanks
 The God of Battles and of Victory,
 Him who hath saved our country—now our own!
 The Ascription o'er, the Priestly Woman bows
 Still lower down—down to the earth she falls.
 Her Orphan children raise her—she is dead.
 And all the people wept for joy and grief.

THE PROPHECY.

WINDS roar : the ragged clouds are torn :
 Glimmers the gibbous moon forlorn :
 Creak ! creak ! the irons groan :
 Look not up, hurry on !
 Dare you look ? The Woman see,
 Low sitting by the baleful Tree—
 Tree, with its fruit of death abhorred,
 Not of the Gardens of the Lord !

II.

One short year of wedded gladness,
 And Grizzel sits in widowed sadness ;
 Lonely, and poor, and thoughtful she,
 Nursing her boy upon her knee.
 Late in the night, slow, without din,
 A stranger Hunchback Dwarf came in,
 Bareheaded, bearded, evil-faced,
 A leathern girdle round his waist,
 A tall staff in his bony hand,
 Nodding as from some weary land.
 On startled Grizzel's arm he laid
 His grasp ; imperfect sounds he made,

And signs whereby he signified
That there all night he would abide.
It could not be : In every feature
How swelled the dumb malignant creature,
To be refused ! With sudden check,
Calm pointing to her infant's neck,
As sleeping in her lap it lay,
He shook his head and passed away.
Next morn, in chalk upon her door,
The Gallows-Tree her baby bore,
With words to make the meaning clear
Of that prophetic picture drear.
Poor Grizzel saw it, shrunk, and pressed
Her infant to her boding breast.

III.

Hopeless waiting, listless wo,
Did mortal man the Future know !
What wouldn't that Mother give to be
Purged of the clinging Prophecy !
It works by night, it works by day,
To take her peace of mind away.
How o'er her boy she bends to trace
The changes of his sleeping face !
If motions from within torment
The features, how her soul is rent ;
The infant passions these may be,
Pledge of that rising Gallows-Tree !
But dimpling, smiling, now he lightens ;
Oh how her hopeful spirit brightens !
Down, down upon his neck she presses,
With many a tear, her vehement kisses.

IV.

In restless hope, in watchful fear,
By urgent love, by awe severe,
From threatened ill her son to save,
No genial freedom Grizzel gave.
A guardianship so jealous bent,
He felt to be a punishment :
Recoiling from the irksome sway,
He learned to scorn and disobey :
And thus from out the froward child
Ungrew the youth with passions wild.
Oh that gloomy moorland wood !
Oh that midnight deed of blood !
He killed and buried there a maid
Whom he had first to shame betrayed.
Vengeance sped. His bones of guilt,
Near where the innocent blood he spilt,
Swinging in chains rot on their pole :
Christ have mercy on his soul !
Thus worked that Prophecy of ill
Itself in sin and sorrow to fulfil.

V.

Childless Grizzel, backward turning,
O'er all the past her spirit yearning,
O'er what she did, what left undone,
To check, to guide, to save her son ;
In process still to calculate
How to have stayed his evil fate,
(Oh weary process, night and day !)
Her wildered brain at last gives way.

The houseless moor, there now is she,
A dweller with her son to be.
Lean snuffing dogs she scares away,
And from his eyes the birds of prey.
With flowerets from the summer lea
She garlands all his ghastly Tree.
And aye she brings a ladder there,
And climbs the Tree, and combs his hair.
She sits below : full on her go
Cutting scuds and whirls of snow;
Morsels of ice, spit from the sky,
In her gray locks unmelted lie;
Swung in the elemental battles,
The Skeleton above her rattles;
Yet there the Word of God she'll read,
So may her son still hear and heed !
And morn and eve, in storm or calm,
She sings for him a holy psalm.

VI.

In her eyes a ghostly shimmer,
By the wan moon's uncertain glimmer,
With her last dregs of light forlorn
Still sicklier in the gray of morn,
From out the storms of midnight see
The Woman of the rueful Tree !
To the Tree she bows her head,
Now she's dying—now she's dead.
But lo ! her hand is on The Book,
And saintly is dead Grizzel's look.

THE TRANSLATION OF BEAUTY.

SKIRTS of sunny-sifted showers !

There the wild bee,

How privileged he,

Childe of the yellow belt and bands of jet,

Sucking the nipples of the maiden flowers,

All honey-wet !

Drops and darkness eastward borne,

Glancingly go ;

Thereon the Bow

Stands in the sea : from out the greening brine,

The white gull twinkles in the violet horn,

Bended divine.

Beauties of a summer day,

How soon ye die !

"Nay, through Man's eye

Glad soul we grow ; in soul translated on,

We take our place, and live in praise for aye,

Round the White Throne."

RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

THE little boy lies still. Ruffings of leaves
 Give him their freshness ; swallows from the eaves
 Twitter their matins sweet ; and far away
 He lists the children at their whooping play.
 But here is she that wiped his forehead damp,
 And watched him, patient as a midnight lamp,
 His mother, ever dear : aye to his bed
 She comes to kiss him, and to pat his head.
 Feet slily soft ! who next ? Ah, well he knows ;
 And the young face looks in on his repose :
 His little sister. Much has she to tell
 Of hoarded wonders since he grew unwell ;
 And much to show, her frock so white and new,
 Her pictures—this for him, and that one too !
 Nodding she shakes the curlèd clouds of hair,
 Which darkly break upon her brow so fair ;
 And o'er him bowing, lets his fingers oft
 Pass o'er her tresses with their pressure soft.

But slowly now along the pathway green
 She leads him, dazzled by the sunny sheen.
 The light wind lifts his sadly-smoothèd hair
 Deliciously, he drinks the fluid air.
 The world is new, is fresh to him ; he sees
 Each little fly, each bird upon the trees :

O'er them the stirring trees, up looking they,
The flecks of lustre on their faces play.
How many children through yon meadow pass,
Where lies the golden sunlight on the grass !
Yon hill how clear, where shepherds sun themselves,
Piping at ease upon its simple shelves !
Here glossy woods, there wheaten uplands lie
Beneath the harvest sun's broad yellow eye.
Blithe reapers there beside the stooks are set ;
Here little gleaners at the gate are met,
Spilling rich laughter from their thriftless eyes,
Dark with the glory of the sultry skies.
Proudly his sweet young sister leads him on,
As if to show him like a trophy won ;
Then turns with him : The appointed walk is o'er ;
Their mother, smiling, meets them at the door.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

CANTO I.

CYRA'S INTERVIEW WITH THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

To yon high hills, how fitly stern of stress,
 Ezekiel takes the shattered wilderness,
 Where rooted trees half hide, but not compose
 To grace the births of Nature's rudest throes,
 Imperfect, difficult, unreconciled :
 Blind moaning caverns, rocks abruptly piled
 Below, and herbless black peaks split asunder
 Aloft, the awful gateways of the thunder,
 Accord they not with him whose burdened eye
 Sees, through the rent of kingdoms great and high,
 Thick gleams of wrath divine, whose visions range
 Throughout the obstructed solitudes of change,
 Whose spirit stumbles 'midst the corner-stones
 Of realms disjointed and of broken thrones ?

II.

As on Ezekiel strode, he saw a maid
 Sit in the vale, and on a harp she played.
 Before her sate upon a rugged stone
 A form of man, with tangled locks o'ergrown,

Haggard, and dark, and wild; of power and pride,
A milk-white horse was pawing by his side.
Near went the Prophet; up that savage man
Sprung, tossed his hair, and to the mountains ran;
O'er rocks and bushes bounding with him went,
With startled mane, that steed magnificent.
The minstrel rose; when she Ezekiel saw,
She laid her harp aside with modest awe;
In haste she came to meet him, named his name,
And prayed his blessing with a reverent claim.
"Maid, who art thou?"

"Cyra, of Judah I."

"Why dwelling here? And who yon form on high,
Chased by the mighty horse?"

"Thou man of God,

Austere thy visions, so is thy abode:
The stony mountains where old lions live,
Dread paths to thee, to thee a dwelling give:
Not in soft city, not in kingly dome
Thy jealous soul will deign to make thy home;
So art thou seldom within Babylon's gate,
And so hast heard not of her Monarch's fate,
Forth driven by God to wander from his throne,
Till seven appointed times be o'er him gone!
Behold that King—him followed by yon steed,
Doomed on the hills and in the wilds to feed!
His head forlorn, in nature's naked eye,
Is beat by all the changes of the sky;
He sees the morning star, and the wide noon,
He sees the nightly ordinance of the moon,
Sleep seldom his: The wild beast's in its den,
But through the night must roam the King of men!
Such was his sore extremity, till I——"

"So be abased—be stricken—worse than die,"

Exclaimed the Prophet, "who Jehovah's trust
Scorning, bow down our Zion to the dust !
So shall they be : Amazement shall lay bare
Her enemies' souls, and terror, and despair.
So has it been : Scarce Edom's name remains.
Soft Syria's loins are wrapped about with pains.
Tyre, where is she? The old haughty crocodile,
Is he not bridled on the shores of Nile?
On Ammon's head, on Moab's, Jehovah's doom
Has poured a midnight of unmelted gloom !
God is gone forth ! Abroad His swift storms fly,
And strike the mystic birds from out the sky :
Soar proudly, burnished birds of Nineveh,
Home to the windows of your glory flee ;
Ha ! broke your wings, your trodden plumage rots—
The doves of Ashur lie among the pots !
For him ! for yonder outcast—wo ! and wo
Still more to him who thus has brought her low !—
Beneath her branchless palm must Judah sit,
Her widowed face with pens of sorrow writ,
And round her feet the fetters ! But has he
Reaped glory hence? Earth's proud men, come and see !
At best a royal brute, he even without
The majesty of mischief roams about !
So let him——"

"Whelmed beneath Jehovah's ban,
'Tis ours to spare the much-enduring man.
Sore laid on us, his hand crushed down our State ;
And great the blame, as our oppression great :
Yea, curse his pride of warlike youth ; Oh then,
Still let me name him 'midst earth's noblest men !
But he was bowed, and, prostrate in his change,
Followed the wild ox in his boundless range,
And ate the grass ; his head was wet with dew ;

Like claws his nails, his hair like feathers grew.
But I have helped him through his years of ill,
And ne'er will leave him, but will love him still.
Bless him, and curse him not !”

With anger shook

The son of Buzi ; tragic waxed his look ;
With vehement force, as if to meet the storm,
He wrapped his rugged mantle round his form.
“Look to me, damsel !” cried he : “are not we
Carried away by our iniquity ?
Shall then the soft desires of woman rule
Thy spirit still, and make thee play the fool ?
Because within his silken palaces
He made thee dwell in love's delicious ease,
Thou thought'st it good, and chased him to the hill
In caves of rocks to play the harlot still ?
Lord God of Israel ! shall we count it light
So to be driven from Zion's holy height,
Our princes captives made, our stately men
Hewn down in battle, Thy dread courts a den ;
And scorning types without, and rites within
Of penitence, conform to Heathen sin ;
No thought of our estate, no sigh for it,
Degrading even the dust wherein we sit ?
Happy the slain ones of our people ! blest
Who fell in Zion's wars, and are at rest !
Yea, happy they whose shoulders labour sore,
With burdens peeled, or weary with the oar ;
For so their manly bodies are not broke
With idle dalliance—slavery's heaviest yoke !
Ye tall and goodly youths, your fate is worse,
Your beauty more than burning is a curse ;
For ye must stand in palaces, soft slaves
Of kings—your brethren lie in noble graves !—

Until your base shame for your origin
Beyond your wanton masters make you sin ;
For ye upon the mountains, with desire
Unholy, looking toward the Persian fire,
Eat, not Jehovah-ward, forgetting Him,
Forgot the gates of old Jerusalem !—
Thou, too, thou maid of Judah, wo ! that thou
Hast lived to be what I must deem thee now !”

He ceased. Like flames that burn the sacrifice
With darting points, shone out the virgin's eyes ;
Shook her black locks of youth ; drawn back she stood
Dilating high in her indignant mood.
She seized her harp, she swept the chords along,
Forth burst a troubled and tumultuous song ;
Till, purified from anger and from shame,
Austere, severely solemn it became ;
Yet dashed with leaping notes, as if to tell
Jehovah mighty for His Israel.
Soft gleamed the Prophet's eyes ; he knew that strain,
Heard in the days of Salem's glorious reign,
When Judah's maids in sacred bands advanced,
With garlands crowned, and to the timbrel danced.
And shone through glazing tears young Cyra's eyes,
Her forehead now uplifted to the skies.
Her harp she dropped ; her bosom greatly heaved,
Till words burst forth, and thus her heart relieved :—
“Perish the song, the harp, the hand for aye ;
Die the remembrance of our land away ;
Ne'er be revived the praises of the Lord
In the glad days of Zion's courts restored,
If I——” again she sobbed and hid her face—
“If I have been the child of such disgrace !
But ah ! forgive me, great Ezekiel,
Thus to be angry I have done not well ;

For thine the spirit that for Israel's weal
Burns with the fires of jealousy and zeal.
Oh hear thy handmaid now ! for I shall sleep
In death, ere cease I for yon King to weep.
In that dread night—his wars be judged by God !—
When o'er our walls victoriously he rode,
He saw me lying in the trampled mire,
Which bloody glittered to the midnight fire ;
Sprung, snatched me from my mother's dead embrace,
Ere the fierce war-steeds trode my infant face ;
Smiled on me ; to his large mailed bosom pressed me ;
Home took me with him, with his love caressed me,
There made me dwell, there gave to me a name,
And to me there a father all became.

“Then—for my sacred origin I knew—
Me, yet a child, Jehovah taught to view
With scorn the Gentiles' sins ; my opening days
Taught, more than theirs, to love our people's ways.
The Monarch smiled : nor sought he to subdue
The spirit honoured whence my choice I drew ;
He gave me Hebrew teachers, them he charged
To see my childhood with their lore enlarged,
To compromise not in their captive place,
But tell Jehovah's doings for our race,
The ancient glories of our people tell,
And in his Court like princes made them dwell.

“Nor heavier task was mine, than that the King
A song of gladness made me often sing,
To cheer his spirit ; for Jehovah vexed him
With nightly visions, and with dreams perplexed him.
My harp I touched ; when he was cheered, then I
The mournful hymns of our captivity
Did ne'er forget : magnanimous he smiled,
And called me playfully an artful child ;

Then was I bold, my prayer he heard with grace,
And gravely promised to restore our race.
God cast him out; I followed to the hills
My more than father, to divide his ills :
On summits high, and in the wastes his lair,
I found him strange and brutish in despair ;
But tried my harp, less savage soon he grew,
And softly followed through the falling dew.
Caves in yon rock, our mountain people there
Had helped me first his dwelling to prepare ;
There now less wild the food of men he finds,
And lies through night unstricken by the winds.

“ In yonder hut a shepherd of our race
For years has given me an abiding-place.
His daughters love me as their sister ; they
My simple service share with me by day,
To feed the flocks. When men their labour leave,
And past is now the milking-time of eve,
I harp before his cave, down from the steep
Comes the wild King, and couches him to sleep—
Oh, not to sleep ; with self-accusing blame,
With madness wrestling, and with fitful shame.
Sweet psalms I play him then, till in calm wo
Lies his large heart ; then to our cot I go.

“ By Daniel’s wise advice, his battle-steed
Was brought beside him on the hills to feed ;
His armour too was brought, before his eyes
Nightly it gleams as on his bed he lies :
Memorials these of his heroic days,
To deeds of men again his soul to raise.
Remembering hence his glory, more because
The appointed season to a period draws,
His heart with reason swells ; his ancient men
Of counsel come to seek him in his den.

Taught by affliction, by our God restored,
 Then will he free the people of the Lord.
 'Joy ! joy for Zion !' let the captives sing.
 Come thou with me, oh come and bless the wandering
 King !"

" True child of Judah ! by the Spirit's might
 Drawn to those hills, I wait the visioned night.
 Just is thy gratitude. The God of peace
 Raise up the King, and make our bondage cease !
 My thought injurious turns to solemn praise ;
 And if thou keep thy sweet unblemished days
 In Heathen courts, and if thy gentle power
 May for our people haste redemption's hour,
 Praised shalt thou be in Israel's borders wide,
 Yea, praised—be this thy just and awful pride—
 In Heaven, where the great Sanctities abide."

So spake the Seer. Low bowing to be blest,
 The Jewess knelt ; stooping her head he kissed,
 Then turned away ; with sobbing joy o'ercome,
 Thus well approved, the virgin sought her home.

CANTO II.

THE PLOT OF MERDAN AND NARSES.

High rides the summer moon : Away, how slow,
 The lordly waters of Euphrates go !
 But see ! a shadowy form from yonder rank
 Of glimmering trees comes o'er the open bank.
 Here Narses meets him :—" Merdan, you are late."
 " Admit the toils that on my office wait,
 And say, your purpose."

" Nay, 'tis mine to hear
 What first you promised to my midnight ear."

Then Merdan spake :—"Our mutual hearts are known,
Why pause we then? Our theme be now the throne.
Meet we not here on our appointed way,
To learn from Chardes what the planets say,
Who nightly standing on his glimpsing towers,
With piercing ken looks through the starry hours?
Not rivals, twins are we in present sway;
What then? 'tis based upon the passing day.
Can we maintain it? Merodach is weak:
His father now those ancient servants seek:
Reason returns: again he'll sit on high:
And with our lives the Prince his own mean life will
buy."

"Ha! yes; he knows his feebleness has failed
To back our counsels: these shall be assailed:
The blame of his misrule must we exhaust;
And, if we live, our power at least is past."

"His faith, nor might, to us can safety bring:
Who trusts him hides his jewel in a sling.
In heart he is a parricide, but still
His weakness fears to justify his will.
May such be trusted? Not his innocence;
He must be guilty, for our hope is thence.
'Tis ours to goad him on to such a length,
That farthest crime alone may seem his strength."

"Say we at once the outcast Monarch slew,
And crushed our fears?"

"Nay, that his son must do;
So shall our knowledge of his guilt ensure
Bribes for our silence, and our rule endure.
Well, then, at once, he must insult his sire,
That fears for life may perfect his desire,
And thus complete the parricide. On high,
Where vales embosomed in the mountains lie,

I know a place where comes the desert King
Each noon his limbs beneath the shade to fling.
Beside him feeds his battle-horse, that bore
His youth triumphant on from shore to shore,
A prince's gift, much loved : Near couched each night,
Upsprings he neighing with the morning light,
Awakes his lord, again goes forth with him
To range the pastures till the twilight dim.

“ Now Parthian Chud's our friend, advanced by us
To keep the royal hounds, he'll help us thus :—
His tiger-dogs, from India's northern woods,
Fell mountain-climbers, glorying in the floods,
Three previous days shall hunger, till arise
Their bristly necks, and burn their laming eyes ;
Then shall our Monarch hunt ; they, famine-clung,
Shall sweep the barren hills with lolling tongue,
Where no prey is, led thither on pretence
That there 'twas seen—it since has wandered thence.
Chud then, instructed, shall his Sovereign lure
To nearer hills, as if it there were sure ;
And in the noon shall he his beagles lead
To where the wild King loiters with his steed.
Behold them started ! Rush the kindled pack ;
Not even unfeigned restraint could keep them back,
So fiercely hunger pricks their headlong way,
Against their instinct on the unwonted prey.
Onward they drive : At once, perhaps—'tis well—
The Ox-King falls before their crowding yell ;
Nor bone, nor scalp, the bloody grass alone
Next moment tells our fears with him are gone.
If Chud from royal game can them restrain,
At least on Zublon shall they go amain ;
Or falls the horse, or flees but soon to fall.
The mad King sees his son—has seen it all.

That son away pursues the storm of chase,
And ne'er again dares see his father's face.
What must he do? The rest has been explained :
His sire must die : Our place is thus maintained."

"This more : Our King, when Prince, with bold desire
Loved Cyra, heedless of his angry sire.
When Heaven's decree against the latter sped,
The Hebrew damsel from the Palace fled.
But I have learned her haunt ; far in the wild
She dwells, a Jewish hind's adopted child,
The embruted Monarch near ; for hers the praise
To love, to tend him through his humbled days.
So let this maid be carried from her place,
Say on the night of our appointed chase ;
Then, for I know our Sovereign loves her still,
Shall she become the creature of his will.
Then, in his hours of hope unfilial
And mingled fear, shall we declare her thrall—
Thus from the service of his father gained
By force, and in his palace thus detained.
So shall he feel again that father wronged ;
And dare be bold, to have his life prolonged."

"Our scheme is doubly one, how wisely blent !
It but remains to push it to the event.
This be in haste, for Persia's threatened war
Against us hangs upon the east afar.
The issue? Good our plan in any case.
But now our King has leisure for the chase."

"Behold ! the first faint shoots of morning light
Breathe upward through the shadowy cone of night,
Sickening the eastern stars : 'Tis now the time,
Old Chardes waits us on his watch sublime ;
From him the signs celestial shall we know,
Shape farther plans, and onward safely go."

CANTO III.

THE HUNT.

Before her cavern stands at evening-tide
Cyra, her harp clear glittering by her side ;
Now for the King she looks far east away,
And now she turns unto the setting day ;
She veils her dazzled face, her garments shine
With molten gold, like angel robes divine,
Touched by the sun, as large he stoops to rest
Beyond the Assyrian kingdoms in the west.
Eastward again she looked : she cleared her eye—
Ha ! yes, she sees come o'er yon mountain high
A courser white ; swift dogs are on his rear ;
Upcoming hunters on the hill appear.
Can that be Zublon ? From the mountain fails
The chase now swallowed by the nearer vales,
Perplexed and wide ; again it comes in sight,
And lo ! 'tis Zublon sure that leads the flight.
He takes the river, stems it with disdain,
Paws the near shore, forth springs, comes on amain.
The yielding dogs float down athwart the flood,
Swarm on the bank, renew their yells for blood,
Regain their track ; inextricable, dense,
With crowding heads they wedge their way intense.
In fear majestic on the charger drew ;
White clouds of smoke his seething nostrils blew ;
Now streamed his tail on high, now swept the plain ;
Abroad were driven the terrors of his mane.
He toiled, he strained, he neared the well-known maid,
He saw his rock, turning he proudly neighed,
Went reeking past, and rushed into his cave ;
And Cyra ran the gallant horse to save.

Quick dipped in oil, and lit, in either hand,
Of gummy pine she bore a waving brand,
Forth held them, hasted to the entrance back,
There met the brindled leaders of the pack,
Scorched their dry tongues, and blinded them with fire,
And still she kept them back, still forced them to retire.
One minute more ! impelled by crowding power
And hungry rage, the damsel they'll devour.
But here be mountain woodmen ; they have heard
The tumult, hasted, and the maid will guard,
True to the King : with banded axes they
Dashed off the dogs, and kept them still at bay,
Till Chud the hunter came with smarting thong,
And down the mountain lashed the yelling throng.

CANTO IV.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S CAVE.

The moon full-orbed came up the east, and shone
Sweetly above the hills of Babylon :
Forth went the virgin Cyra by her light,
And wet her sandals in the dews of night,
Oft pausing she to strike her harp's clear string,
Through the still vales to lure the homeward King.
Long hours she roamed, but ne'er her wild lord came ;
The keener heavens breathed chilly through her frame ;
Then back she slowly went, and, to divide
The lonely hours, her scented fire supplied.
Nor yet, her hope though fainting, did she leave
Undone the filial duty of each eve ;
But mixed his bowls of milk and tempered wine,
With drops infused, the pith of flowers divine,

In gentle wisdom that their healing dew
In nightly sleep his spirit might renew.

II.

A foot, a shadow came ; uprose the maid ;
'Tis he !—forward she springs—is she afraid ?—
Awed she draws back, she stands in mute surprise,
To see that solemn light within his eyes—
The strict concentrated check—the lucid reins
Of reason, ruler o'er ecstatic pains.
With silent love on Cyra long he gazed,
Till came some quick sense of his life abased ;
Gleamed his proud tears ; into his cave's recess
He turned away in his sublime distress,
As in pale Hades, 'midst dim-visions things,
Stalk the proud shadows of forgotten kings.

III.

Her lamp the maid replenished with the oil
Of fragrant trees, to work a pleasing toil
Of needlework. Too glad for this, she stood
Entranced, till startled by a groan subdued.
Noiseless her footsteps as the falling snows,
With shaded lamp unto the King she goes ;
Let fall the shifting light by mild degrees,
Till now the features of her lord she sees.
He sleeps, yet brokenly ; those sultry gleams
Betray a spirit toiling in his dreams.
Forth Cyra hastes, but soon she reappears
With mingled balms ; with these, and with her tears
That dropped the while, she washed those dews away
From off his forehead, till refreshed he lay ;

And kissed his cheek, and with a daughter's care
Arranged the masses of his raven hair.

IV.

Then sate the maid, unrolling, white as milk,
Down from her knee a web of Persian silk,
Flowered by her needle, as her shaping mind
Thereon the King's young conquests had designed,—
From Nile victorious to the glimmering North,
Whose pictured form with keys of ice came forth ;
O'er Tyre triumphant, o'er Damascus, o'er
Great kingdoms eastward to the Indian shore :
All here portrayed in glory and in gloom,
Rich as the work of an enchanted loom.
Her heart a silent covenant had made,
The finished gift before him should be laid
That solemn day, when he should leave that den,
Raised up by God again to govern men ;
That to his heart, his humbled sense, his awe
Of Him who ruled him with a wondrous law—
His fear from this—his joy, redeemed—his thought
Of her who loved him, and that picture wrought,
A lasting great memorial it might be,
That Zion's captives he was bound to free.
His reason comes, her half-wrought cloth demands
The sleepless haste of her unwearied hands.

V.

Forth came the King ; his worn and awful face,
On Cyra bent, began to melt apace
To gleams—how tender ! farther still subdued
To mingled tears of more than gratitude.

Stung by some fierce remembrance, fiercely changed,
With sudden strides throughout the cave he ranged ;
Like toil-caught lion of his prey bereaved,
The mighty hinges of his bosom heaved ;
Wild flew his locks ; and darkness o'er his face
Settled, like night upon the desert place.
But trembling came : he knelt with humbled brow,
Solemn as when the ancient forests bow,
Smote by the cardinal winds :—" I know Thee well,"
Uprising, said he, " God of Israel !
The bright stars are the dust beneath Thy feet !
Vast ages dim not Thine essential seat !
Yet these permitted eyes, did they not see
Thy Glory in the furnace with the Three ?
An effluence, like a globe of crystal air,
Was round about them : scathless was their hair.
Beyond, the red and roaring haze but showed
More beautiful these children of their God.
A Fourth was with them : glowing were His feet
As iron drawn from out the boiling heat !
Was it not Thou ? Brightness was Thy attire,
Mild walking with them on the stones of fire !
Under Thy dread permission, in Thy sight
I rise a King ; but I will reign aright.
Though greatly wronged, to-day though galled my pride,
Yet to my heart shall vengeance be denied.
Yea, by their insults of this day extreme,
My foes have chased my madness like a dream.
Theirs no excuse ; yet, by Thy grace upraised,
To me Thy mercy shall by mine be praised :
For I am humbled ; ne'er shall be forgot
Thy power which curbed me down to such a lot.
Oh hear me now for her, this precious child,
More than my daughter on the mountains wild !

For me her dear eyes faint : Great God of Heaven,
Be health, be gladness to my Cyra given !
Let her but live, that I to her may prove
At least a father for her boundless love !”

He ceased. Young reverence her eyes abased ;
With trembling joy a cup to him she raised.
He took the cup, with murmured love he blessed
The virgin, drank, retired, and lay at rest ;
For she had spiced it with the sovereign flowers
Of sleep, to soothe him through the midnight hours.

VI. .

There sits young Cyra ! As her work is sped,
Waves the redundant glory of her head,
Her dark and heavy locks. Oh, more than wife !
Oh, bold and lavish of thy generous life
For him thy lord ! What though, by cares subdued,
Pale is thy cheek, O virgin greatly good,
All fair art thou as the accomplished eve,
Whose finished glories not a wish can leave ;
Yea, more than eve consummate, as her skies
Where lurk the cognate morrow's glorious dyes :
So wears thy youth still promise, still when won
The perfect grace of every duty done !
Yea, who can see thee in this holy hour,
Nor deem thee guarded by supernal power ?
Nor deem he sees, of Watchers here divine,
Incessant gleams around this cavern shine ?
Light speed thy task, young Cyra ; happy be ;
Here angel wings are visitant for thee !
But hush ! but hark ! ha ! see—a stealthy shape !
A second, third !—oh, how may she escape ?

She starts—she's seized—she struggles—shrieks for aid,
In vain ; the King in charmèd sleep is laid.
Masked forms around her throng, with many a foot
The emblazoned web of beauty they pollute.
Even Zublon's help she craves in her dismay ;
But yielding, fainting, she is borne away.

CANTO V.

THE BATTLE.

Forth flames the day. From off his terrace high
The King Chaldean, with a troubled eye,
Long eastward looks ; for lo ! afar descried,
Comes on the Persian war sun-glorified,
To quell his throne. His nearer view commands
The embattled might of Babylonian lands,
In gorgeous ferment. From the city pour
Fresh hosts continuous through the impatient hour :
Their jostling chariots leap ; the tide runs high
With all the pomp of flowing chivalry,
Arabian camels, and Nisæan steeds
Bearing a province of auxiliar Medes.
Onward they scour ; for westward o'er the plain
The flower of Persian kingdoms draws its train,
From where its world of waters Indus brings
To Ocean, upward by his hoary springs,
To where the Tartar's winking hordes look forth
Over the snowy bastions of the North—
An army great and terrible : Earth seems
To be on fire beneath their brazen gleams.

II.

Near waxed the fronting lines ; intensely keen
They paused : stern was the silence them between.
Loud blew the Persian trumpets, wide the heaven
By one great shout from all their hosts was riven.
Chaldea answered on the west. At once
The Immortal Band of Persia's youth advance,
Flanked by a cloudy stir on either side,
Of swarming horse and archers opening wide.
Came o'er each army, darkening like a shroud,
The crossing texture of the arrowy cloud.
Beneath, the vans were locked together grim,
Were interfused the battle's ridges dim,
There opening, closing here, till form gave way;
Forgot the imposing beauty of array.

How gazed the King, intensely forward bowed,
As thick and thicker grew the battle-cloud,
Still darker waxed, now broke in lightened seams,
Again devoured the momentary gleams !
Forth rushed a western wind, backward it rolled
The heavy battle's slow uplifted fold.
O beauty terrible ! he saw afar
The sultry ridges of the heaving war,
Saw down long avenues of disarray
The harsh-scythed chariots mow their levelled way.
'Twas doubtful long, but now the struggle pressed
With weight slow-whelming, gaining on the west ;
Far back are swayed the wide Chaldean swarms,
They bow, they faint before the Persian arms.
But hark ! a mighty trumpet in the west !
But lo ! a warrior for the combat drest
In mail refulgent, on a milk-white steed,
Comes dashing east with earth-devouring speed !

Started the Prince, pale grew his forehead, shook
His knees, as stood he still constrained to look ;
For, ha ! his father's form that champion showed,
And plunging deep into the battle rode.
Far waved his sway, stemmed the Chaldean rout,
And changed their terror to a mighty shout,
By thousand thousands on the turrets thronged,
And lofty walls of Babylon, prolonged.
A sultrier ferment stirred the field : a band
Thickened behind that arm of high command,
As onward, eastward, with the whirlpool's might,
It sucked the reflux of the scattered fight ;
Till, with its full concentrated attack,
It bore the centre of the Persians back.
Nor this alone : in shouldered masses wide
Their van was cleared away on either side.
And deep was pushed that column unwithstood,
And aye that waste collateral was renewed,
Till eastward far the Babylonian host
More than regained the ground which they had lost.
Then reeled the Persian power ; it wavered, broke,
Was forced, was whelmed in one commingled shock.
Their camels fled, their Indian archers ceased,
Their chariots rolled away into the east ;
Far driven their host, consumed, like stubble sere
Wide fired when withering east winds close the year.

III.

The Prince his chamber sought : he bade with speed
Narses and Merdan come, his counsellors of need.
They came. " We task you not," he cried, " to say,
Not even to guess that Victor of this day.

Slaves ! slaves ! we'll hear you not. This night at least,
This one night more, we'll be a king and feast.
Our Palace guards be doubled. Then when we
Are flown with cups, and filled with midnight glee,
Be Cyra brought ; we'll make her drink old wine,
Her heart to warm, to make her beauty shine :
Long have we loved her ; and, by Bel above !
Ere morn shall we be happy in her love."

CANTO VI.

THE BANQUET.

Come to the Banquet ! Lift your dazzled eyes,
Survey the glory that before you lies !
Far down yon avenue of fainting light,
The dim dance swims away upon the sight.
Behold the central feast ! Behold the wine
Around in brimming undulations shine,
As shakes the joyous board ! There Beauty sips
The purple glimmer with her murmuring lips ;
For there the rose-crowned concubines are set,
For there the nymphs of Babylon are met,
Each one a princess : Their illumined eyes
Glitter with laughter, glance with coy surprise ;
And aye the love-sick dulcimer is played,
Till faintly languishes each melting maid.
Here peaceful satraps quaff : their lordly breasts
Built out with gladness, sit the chosen guests.
And there the Prince : But oft he looks around,
And seems to listen for some coming sound.
Fear in his heart ; each bowl, each golden cup
With blood, for wine, to him seems welling up,

Smote by the light of that branched candlestick :
These Holy Vessels well may make him sick,
Torn from Jehovah's Courts with impious hands,
To light the unhallowed feasts of Heathen lands.

·II.

But see young Cyra brought by eunuch slaves,
Pale, pale as are the dead within their graves,
Yet beautiful, in vestments flowered and fair,
With hasty garlands in her raven hair.
Pleased are the nobles of the banquet ; round
Soft murmurs tell the favour she has found.
'Gainst scorn and wrong her heart had high defence ;
Approval quelled her glowing innocence,
And Cyra tore the roses from her head,
In trembling haste her Jewish veil to shed.
It was not there ; but nature there supplied
More than the wimple of a regal bride,
How lovelier far ! Her eager hand unbound
Her hair dishevelled ; far it fell around
Her comely form, black as the ancient Night,
And veiled the virgin from that insolent light.

Entranced in love, forgetting every fear,
And flushed with wine, the reeling Prince drew near.
"Thou chosen flower of Jewry, why so pale ?"
He cried. "Nay, look from out that envious veil.
Give me thy soft hand, come drink wine with me,
Cling to my love, my bosom's jewel be !"

Back Cyra stepped, her tresses back she threw ;
Their wavy beauty o'er her shoulders flew.
But burned her eye intense, as far it looked,
Nor check of terror intermediate brooked ;

For in a moment the prophetic might,
God-given, was hers, the seer's awful sight.
Pale, fixedly rapt, concentrated, entranced
She stood, one arm outstretched, one foot advanced;
Nor moved that foot, nor fell that arm disturbed,
Not for a moment was her far glance curbed,
As from her lips, o'erruled with Heavenly flame,
The impetuous words that told the vision came :—
"Cling to thy love? I see a haughtier bride
Sent down from Heaven to clasp thy wedded side!
Oh, more than power, than majesty she brings,
Drawn from the loins of old anointed Kings,
To be her dower! Destruction is her name,
With terror crowned, with sorrow and with shame!
Her eyes of ravishment shall burn thee up!
And Babylon shall drink her mingled cup!
Weary thine idol-gods, old Babylon;
Yet tremble, tremble for thy glory gone!
City of waters! not o'erflowing thee,
Thy boasted streams shall yet thy ruin be!
Look to thy rivers! Shod with crusted blood,
The Persian mule—I see him on thy flood
Walk with dry hoof! Ha! in thy hour of trust,
He stamps thy golden palaces to dust,
Which dims the bold winds of the wilderness
One hour—Then, where art thou? 'And who shall guess
Thy pomp? its place, even? Let the bitter harsh
Give quaking answer from her sullen marsh;
From drier haunts, where doleful creatures dwell,
Let tell the satyr, let the dragon tell!"

She ceased, she clasped her hands, nor yet withdrew
Her eye concentred in its piercing view.
"Nay," said the Prince, "it ill befits those lips
To talk of kingdoms' and of thrones' eclipse!

Rein now the lovely madness of those eyes,
And see the bliss that near before thee lies.
Thy harp? 'Twas fetched with thee from out the cave."
—The Monarch nodded to a waiting slave,
The harp was brought—"Now, strike one nuptial strain
Of those that graced thy wisest Sovereign's reign:
Sing a glad song of Solomon." She took
Her harp inviolate, as with scorn she shook;
Forth, burst on burst, her holy quarrel leapt
'Gainst Zion's mockers, as the chords she swept.
"Nay," cried the Prince, and interposed his hand,
"Sweet Fury, stay; thy harp must be more bland.
Give us—we'll teach thee." Back in sacred pride
The Jewess shrunk. "It shall not be!" she cried.
"Our people's woes—O Jacob's God, how long?—
Have filled these chords with many a mournful song,
Have sanctified them thus. Yea, for thy King,
Thy father, too, how oft has thrilled each string,
To soothe him in the lonely wilderness,
By thee forgotten in his sore distress!
But I did ne'er forget him! Thou bad son,
My harp were tainted, touched by such a one,
Ungrateful, daring in voluptuous rest,
In the flowered garments of thy women drest,
To shame the throne of such a father; yea,
With dogs of chase to vex him in thy play!
Ne'er shall thy finger touch one hallowed wire!"
Mighty beyond herself, in holy ire
She burst the chords, her harp asunder tore,
And wildly strewed the fragments on the floor.
In quick revulsion kneeling down she cast
Her eyes to Heaven. Loud blew a trumpet blast.
Up sprung she. Fear was in the Prince's eye;
Yet, "To my chamber with her!" was his cry.

Slaves seized the maid ; she shrieked ; with effort strong,
Oh, minutes, moments could she but prolong !
Hark ! shouts and clashing swords !—" Help, God, ere I
Must—" is she saved ? The doors wide bursting fly ;
He comes sublime—'tis he ! the King restored !
Faces and forms of war dread thronging guard their lord.

CANTO VII.

THE DEATH OF CYRA.

" Majestic child of gratitude ! this hour
I bid thee ask not half my realm for dower :
I dare not mock thy pure young soul ; but say
How shall I honour—nought can thee repay ?"
Thus spake the King to Cyra, as she stood
Before him trembling and with eyes subdued.
('Twas on the morn which saw the Palace cleared,
The guilty quelled, the lawful Sovereign feared.)
" Why tremble, child ? Uplift to me the face
That met me first with smiles of infant grace,
Then when I saw it lie, a priceless gem
Shining in blood, all pleased, upturned to them
Who trode around thee, and had scorned to bow
To save from crushing hoofs thy radiant brow.
I saw, O God ! thy bloody hands in play
Grasp at the fetlocks in their perilous way ;
I seized thee up, around my neck were thrown
Thy little arms, and thou becam'st mine own.
With pride I reigned in youth : In those high days
Thy harp was filled with Zion's sorrowing lays :
Yea, yet a child, sweet wisdom was thy dower ;
Thou saw'st my pride, and sang'st Jehovah's power,

Who for His people stretched His darkened hand,
And drove down wonders o'er the Egyptian land :
The green curled heaps of the curbed sea for them.
The swift pursuing hosts of Pharaoh stem,
Heaved on them, whelming them ; His Israel
O'er lands of drought and deserts terrible
He bore ; before them went His cloud by day,
By night His fiery pillar led the way :
Such was thy anthem, such the argument,
That I might fear, for Judah might relent.
Dark dreams came o'er me ; thy sweet soul refrained
From plaintive hymns, that I might not be pained :
Oh more than generous, delicately just
To sorrow wert thou when I lay in dust !
But I am raised to reason's awful peace ;
And ne'er to tell thy goodness will I cease.
With songs the gifted bards of Babylon,
With harps peculiar, shall thy praise make known.
Aloft a golden tablet shall declare,
In grateful lines, for me thy wondrous care,
Reared on those mountains : Thee all lands shall know,
And in thy presence queens shall softly go."

With tears of gratitude the virgin kissed
The Monarch's hand, low kneeling to be blest.
"Be just," she rising said, "be more than kind
To me—let Zion's sufferings touch thy mind ;
Build up her walls, her Temple ! Let thy hand
Shield back our people to their ancient land !
Would that the days were come, oh would they were,
When old, old men again shall be in her,
Again forth leaning on their staves shall meet
With cheerful voices in each sunny street,
Shall count her towers, her later glories show,
Shall tell the praise of one exalted foe !

Think not of me, my young life's waning fast :
I feel it here. But oh, thy trouble's past !
And now, my King, my father, in my hour
Of death I'll claim of thee a daughter's dower :
Thy love alone from tears has kept me free,
When oft I've longed our sacred land to see ;
Ne'er shall I see it, but I'll make thee swear
To take my body hence, and lay it there.
And wilt thou not, as in thy days of need
I've loved thee much? Thou wilt, thou wilt indeed !"

"I will not look ; I'll hear thee not ; nor speak,
As if my Cyra were so faint and sick !
Cold winds indeed have hurt thee in that den ;
But fear not, God will make thee well again.
I'll talk of hope : 'Twere more to me than power,
To have thee near me to my latest hour ;
Yet thee to honour, to myself severe,
I'll haste to set thee in a loftier sphere.
The prophet Daniel shares my council-board,
Young, beauteous, wise, accepted of the Lord ;
Say, couldst thou love him? 'Twere a joy to me,
In raising him esteemed, to honour thee.
Then for his sake, for thine, would I restore
Thy people, make Jerusalem as before,
Make Daniel king ; his spousal queen be thou,
And round to thee I'll make the kingdoms bow."

"No, no !" she said : "Restore our ancient race,
But let me die beholding still thy face !
Forgive me, Abraham's God !" She said, and grasped
And to her bosom passionately clasped
His knees, and sunk : One quick convulsive thrill
Throughout her body passed, and all was still.

II.

He raised her up—O terror ! O despair !
He pressed her heart—no pulse is stirring there.
Borne to a couch, he held that lovely head,
And gazed upon her in his silent dread ;
By her unheeded now : No more she sees
Her father and her king—oh, more to her than these !
He started, called his slaves ; but vain the aid
Of man, he closed the eyelids of the maid ;
Then seized her lifeless hand : low bowing there,
He hid his face among her long black hair ;
There lay through night, all silent in his woes ;
And rose not up until the morn arose.

CANTO VIII.

THE END OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

At morn the King arose : He bade he sought
Embalmers taught in Egypt ; they were brought.
With linen pure and costly gums they dressed
That virgin body for the grave's long rest.

II.

Within an ivory coffin Cyra lay ;
Odorous lamps around her night and day
Burned, shining on her with a sweet dim light ;
And there the Monarch fed his sorrowing sight.
Yet oft retired he, as he gave his leave
To Salem's princes o'er the maid to grieve.
Ezekiel heard and came ; by Daniel's side
Walking, the Brethren in the Furnace tried

Came too ; they stood around their daughter dead,
And lowly bowed was each majestic head.
Then communed they of Judah's earlier day,
Her prophet's vision, and her poet's lay,
Her judges, priests, her mighty men who fought
Jehovah's battles, and deliverance wrought ;
Forgetting not those women famed of old,
For deeds beyond a woman's blood made bold.
Of Cyra then they spake, great was their praise
Of her endeavour Zion to upraise.
Then bowing down, when they had ceased to speak,
The sun of Buzi kissed the virgin's cheek,
Weeping the while. Forth from the place they go.
Back comes the King in his peculiar wo.

Long years—even till his death—his heart would there
Have kept her ; but he rose from his despair ;
Recalled her wish ; and, greatly self-denied,
Ordained her body should not there abide,
But to Judea—such her last command—
Should go, should lie within her father's land.

Just to the dear departed one, he bade
Be chariots yoked, and horsemen swift arrayed,
At morn, a goodly escort, to convey
The honoured dead from Babylon away.
And in the tombs of Judah's princely race
Shall gentle Cyra have her burial-place :
Whate'er her birth, a praise with her she brings
More than the blood of many thronèd kings.

They come ! they take her thence ! Silent, aloof,
Stood the great King ; then sought his Palace roof,
And saw that convoy darkly haste away
To Judah's land, beneath the western day.
Soft music mourned the while. On turrets stood,
On roofs and walls, the city's multitude,

All westward looking ; thousand thousands laid
Their foreheads low for Cyra, honoured maid.
As for the King, he tore his straitened vest,
To ease the swelling trouble of his breast ;
And watched that sable troop, till from his eyes,
Far fused to mist, the swimming vision dies.

III.

Down walked the grief-struck King ; but yet put on
A governed wo, and sate upon his throne :
His laws renewed, the glories of his State
Arranged, with god-like majesty he sate.

IV.

Remembering then his pléde by Cyra won,
To raise her people up, the King bade this be done.
But grief for her already had subdued
His heart, relapsing to its mournful mood.
Quick drooped his life : the same revolving year
Saw Cyra die, and him upon his bier.
Yet held in honour their united name
Was Zion's helper, and deliverance came.

GRANDMOTHER.

FAR through the snows of winter come
 To share his widowed Grannie's home,
 The Orphan Boy lays down his head
 Weary on his little bed.
 Oft looking out, with modest fear,
 He sees her anxious face severe,
 Late at her work, as if 'twere due
 To such a heavy burden new.
 Her lamp put out, the clothes are prest,
 How kindly, round his back and breast
 Her face to his, so loving meek,
 He feels a tear drop on his cheek.
 Sobbing, sobbing, all for joy,
 Sobbing lies the Orphan Boy:
 No more sorrow, no more fear,
 Such power is in that simple tear !

II.

Her cottage drowned in roses, sitting
 Before it Grannam plies her knitting ;
 And, prosperous from their city life,
 Her Grandson near sits with his wife.

Before them play their boy and girl,
So fair with many a tangled curl,
Tumbling about, with laughing shout,
As aye they find some floweret out.
A race ! they come ; with Grannie lies
To say who holds the richer prize.
Her glasses wiped, with solemn air
She ponders well, she judges fair.
Judgment pronounced, the little chap,
Back she lays him on her lap,
And measures nice if still her knitting
That stumpy leg be duly fitting.
With family love, and family cheer,
The Orphan pays his Grannie's tear.

THE LYRE.

LIFE to the kosmic ages ! Lyre,
 Burst in blessing, high and higher,
 Still to Him, all to Him,
 Throned above the cherubim,
 Whose "Be" was worlds : in special grace,
 Father of the Thoughtful Race.

From Him, in yonder ebon vault,
 Thee, Order, all the orbs obey.
 Thee, wheeling Earth : Deep hid from day,
 Her crystal stones of virtue fight
 To loyal form ; caprice and fault
 (Arrest, or wild excrescent might,)
 Affirm thy sweet compulsive sway.
 All force, by thee, all balanced rest,
 Draw to the consummate Best.

Soul of her song, dear mother Earth,
 How loves the Lyre to set thee forth !
 Wonder of beauty, wonder of glory !
 But oh thy passionate story !

Yon range of peaks, a ragged saw,
 Far bites the suffering blue :

Be purples, Lyre, to melt the awe ;
Be slants of sifted dew.

Bring out our year : be dash divine,
Be art with burnished charm.—
Hold ! there's wrath in yonder mine
Of gloom, sulphureous bellying deep
In awful stillness—out they leap,
The forky jags of blue alarm !
The thunder roars. The tumult proud
Of broken rainbows, blocks of ruined cloud,
And sunny rifts,
Away it drifts,—
The tumult of the glory drifts.

Spirit of Man, thou mystic plant of grace,
Trefoil of reason, will, and feeling,
How subtle soft the Lyre thy growth revealing
Up to the light of God's own face !
How stern and sweet the Lyre thee, World of Man,
revealing !

Oil on his tongue, gifts in his hand,
From foot to foot the traitor shifts his stand :
Blast him, Lyre, from land to land !

But true to thee the Lyre shall be,—
True as thyself, great soul, to thee :
Yon tender light the sun withdrawn
Leaves, pledge of onward day begun ;
So, duty done to beauty won,
Before thee is perpetual dawn.

It bit the brain, it bit the brain,
The loyal Sword it bit the brain :

In love and fire the sister Lyre
Leaps to the Sword that bit the brain,—
The Sword without a stain.

She makes them shine, our faces shine,
The Dove she makes our faces shine :
For her the Lyre is sweet desire,
The Dove that makes our faces shine,—
The Dove of Peace divine.

Love, holy bells, nor sacramental cups,
Can ease his iron stress :
When Night has locked up the black wilderness,
Down where the suicides lie crouches Despair.
“ Make ready ! ” something cries.
The owl, his weird to-whoop he plies ;
Blurred through the rotten air,
Wink the corpse-candles blue ;
The doleful trees obeisance do ;
The shuddering ground is fealty to Despair.
With Death and Hell he sups.
Lord of Renewal, touch his haggard eyes !
Weary slow, dreary low,
Wails the Lyre to Night and Wo,—
Wails to Winter, Night, and Wo.

Up she laughs to Hope benign ;
Lilies, young saints of dew ;
Larks in the blue ;
Maidens a-milking of the sweet-breathed kine ;
All so sunny ;
Combs of honey,
Oil and apples, wheat and wine :
And love is still the joy divine.

The stern for kin, still win us, Lyre, with forms,
Sweetly relieved, of loveliness :
Far silvery twilights eddying in the stress
Of mountain storms ;
Slow-wheeling birds, blue silent air,
Round shattered summits black and bare ;
Fierce day gone out, in dew to leave
Soft reconciling eve ;
Wild frame-work on the battlements of gloom ;
Isles from the worm ; flowers from the tomb ;
New light to life, as aye of Shades below
Solemn reverberations come and go.

Tickling the spleen, her fancies play ;
Her satire, with incisive tooth,
Bites to the heart of truth ;
She flames on Wrong ; she rends the keeps
Where Innocence in iron sleeps ;
From land to land the Lyre is Freedom's day.
The sum of Nature's forces ? What !
Our God and Father only that ?
How bursts the Lyre, love-wroth ! Down reels
The godhead of the Positive wheels :
From land to land the Lyre is Heavenly day.

" A flash through the tears that would save,
A dash through the vapours of strife,
That leap from the grave to the grave
Which they, the poor leapers, call life !"
No, child unsummed ! Draw, Lyre, for Man,
Solemn and slow, Life's vast evolving plan :
Words die not, acts
Are more than facts :

All things of our related time,
Down to the smallest seeds of circumstance,
From birth to birth advance,
From world to world, eternal and sublime.

Law thus of Life, Beneath—Above !
Be type and pledge, thou Plant of Love.
In the midst of the Garden of Purposes,
(Tell, wondering Lyre) the Plant of Love,
Plant of Renown,
Its root deep down
In the Promise to bruise the Serpent's head,
Sprung ; up it grew, strong up it grew
Through Sinai's fire and Hermon's dew,
Prickly with warning, law, decree ;
And, still to its root of Promise true,
(O Heaven and Earth, that passionate hour !)
Bursting as it wept and bled,
Flowered into Christianity.
O Cross-shaped Flower, our Passion-flower !
O Flower of Love to beautify and bless !

A FATHER'S CURSE:

A Dream,

IN FOUR VISIONS.

VISION FIRST.

A WIDOWED father from the holy fount
 Of Christian sprinkling bore his first-born babe
 Home through the Sabbath noon. And aye his hand
 Arranged the garment in a lighter fold
 To overshadow that breathing face upturned,
 Yet let it freely drink the vital air.
 And oft scarce walked he in his gaze intent,
 Which fed on his boy's face,
 Come out of his own loins,
 Formed in the painful side
 Of a dear mother—gone to barren dust.
 O the wet violets of those sleeping eyes,
 Which glisten through their silky fringed lids!
 Look to that dimpled smile! Look to those gums,
 How sweet they laugh! His little features change,
 To fear now fashioned in his baby dreams:
 With many a kiss and many a murmured word,
 Fain would that father chase away the shadow!

THE VISION CONTINUED.

The Sabbath sun went down the western day.
His sloping beam, mingled with coloured motes,
Came through the leafy checkered lattice in,
Passing into a little bed of peace,
Where lay, in vestments white of innocence,
That child of many vows ; no ruder sound
Than chirp of lonely sparrow in the thatch,
Or fluttering wing of butterfly which beat
The sunny pane, to break his slumber calm.
Before him near, in that mild solemn light,
Kneeling his father prayed,

VISION SECOND.

The Bow was on the East :
One horn descending on a snow-white flock
Of lambs at rest upon a sleek hill-side,
The other showered its saffron and its blue
Down on a band of young girls in the vale,
Tossing their ringlets in their linkèd dance,
Laughing and winking to the glimmering sheen :
Through them and over them the glory fell,
Into the emerald meadow bending inward.
Beneath its arch,
Of beauty built, of promise, and of safety,
I saw that father as a woodman go ;
And wide behind him ran his little boy.
They reached a woody gallery of hills,
And there that father felled the lofty trees,
Whose rustling leaves shook down their twinkling drops,
Wetting his clear axe, glittering in the sun.
Perversely sate aloof, and turned away,

Nor gratified his parent with attention
To what he did, with questions all between,
That boy among the ferns, intently fixed,
Plaiting a crown of rushes white and green.

He tore it with fierce glee.

He tore his flowerets, gathered as he came,
Wildings of coloured summer, heeding ne'er
The freaks and fancies in their spotted cups.
The young outglancing arrows of his eye
Were tipped with cruel pleasure, as he sprang
With froward shoutings leaping through the wood,
O'er shadows lying on the dewy grass,
Hunting a dragon-fly with shivering wings.
The wild-bees swinging in the bells of flowers,
Sucking the honeyed seeds with murmurs hoarse,
Were crushed to please him, for that fly escaped.
The callow hedgelings chirping through the briar
He caught, and tore their fluttering little wings ;
Then hied to where came down a sunless glade,
Cold tinkling waters through the soft worn earth,
Never sun-visited, but when was seen
His green and yellow hair from out the west
Thro' thinner trees, spun 'twixt the fresh broad leaves—
But ne'er it warmed the ground, bare save where tufts
Of trailing plants for ever wet and cold,
And tender stools of slippery fungi grew :
There in a sweet pellucid pool, that boy
Drowned the young birds of summer one by one.

Back came he near his father,

Yet to him turned not ; whistling, looking round
To see what farther mischief he could do ;
Then laid him down and dug into the ground.

Oft turned to him the while

His father fondly looked : Heart-crowding thoughts

Of boyhood's growing wants, and coming youth,
Strengthened a parent's loins : faint shall they not,
Strong for his son shall be : forth shall he tread
The summer slope, the winter's dun green hill
Where melting hail is mingled with the grass,
To strike the gnarled elbows of the oaks.
Now, as he turned renewed unto his toil,
His bosom swelled into the heavèd stroke.

The self-willed boy,
Perversely angry that his father spake not,
And holding in his heart a contest with him,
Formed by himself, of coldness best sustained,
Refrained no longer, but looked round in spite :
He saw the sunbeam through the pillared trees
Fall on his father's bald and polished head,
Bowing and rising to the labouring axe ;
Mouth, eye, and finger mocked that father's head !

VISION THIRD.

There stood a ruined house !
In days of other years, perchance, within
Were beds of sleep, bread, and the sacred hearth,
Children, and joy, and sanctifying grief,
A mother's lessons, and a father's prayers.
Where now that good economy of life ?
Scattered throughout the earth ?
Or has it burst its bounds,
And left this broken outer shell,
Swelling away into the eternal worlds ?
The path to the weed-mantled well grows green ;
The swallow builds among the sooty rafters,
Low flying out and in through the dashed window.

Throughout the livelong day
No form of life comes here,
Save now and then a beggar sauntering by
The stumps, wool-tufted, of the old worn hedge,
That scarcely marks where once a garden was :
He, as he turns the crazy gate, and stops,
Seeing all desolate, then comes away
Muttering, seems cheerless sad
Beyond his daily wants.
No sound of feet
Over that threshold now is heard,
Save when on bleak October eve,
The cold and cutting wind, which blows all through
The hawthorn-bush, ruffling the blue hedge-sparrow,
Shivers the little neat-herd boy beneath,
Nestling to shun the rain
That hits his flushed cheek with sore-driving drops,
And forces him to seek those sheltering walls,
Low running with bent head : But soon the awe
Of things gone by, and the wood-eating worm—
To him the death-tick—drives him forth again
Beneath the scudding blast.
There came an old man leaning on his staff,
And bowing went into that ruined house :
It was that father !
This was the home to which he brought his bride :
This was the home where his young wife had died :
This was the home where he had reared his boy.
Forth soon he came ;
And many tears fell from his aged eyes
Down to the borders of his trembling garment.
Who comes ? He shrinks away ; he fears to meet
That man, his son ! Bold strokes had made him rich :
And, vain not kind, he to a showy dwelling

Had ta'en his father from that lowly cot.
Yet there the old man totters ; there those walls
Stand, what but record of his own mean birth ?
He swept those walls away.

THE VISION CONTINUED.

An old old man sate near a lordly house,
Trembling, not daring once to lift his eyes
Even to the speckled linnet on the bush :
'Twas he—that father !
Came sweeping silks, a haughty pair went past :
That proud disdainful fellow is his son ;
And she who leans upon his arm, attired
With impudence, his wife, whose wealth has made
Him higher still, both heedless of their father.

VISION FOURTH.

That father died neglected, and in death
With struggling love were mingled bitter thoughts—
A Father's Curse.
This, ere his head went down into the grave,
Dug in a corner where meek strangers lie,
Had upward sprung, a messenger succinct,
To trouble all the crystal range of Heaven,
To call on Hell, to post o'er seas and lands,
Nature to challenge in her last domain,
Not to let pass the accursed.
There came a voice—it cried,
“ The storms are ready.”
Forth flew into mid air that Father's form,
No longer mean, a potentate of wrath,
To rule the elements and set them on.

He called the Storms—they came ;

He pointed to his son :

There stood that son—no wife was with him now,

No children pleaded for his naked head—

Upon a broken hill, abrupt and strange,

Under a sky which darkened to a twilight ;

A huddled world of woods and waters crushed,

Hung tumbling round him, earthquake-torn and jammed

From Nature's difficult throes : cut off he stood

From ways of men, from mercy, and from help,

With chasms and ramparts inaccessible.

The tree-tops streaming toward his outcast head,

Showed that the levelled winds smote sore on him ;

Gaunt rampant monsters, half-drawn from the woods,

Roared at him glaring ; downward on his eyes

The haggard vulture was in act to swoop ;

Rains plashed on him ; hail hit him ; darting down,

The flaming forks blue quivered round him keen,

And many thunders lifted up their voice :

All Nature was against him.

Out leapt a bolt,

And split the mount beneath his sinking feet.

O'er him his Father's form burnt fiercely red,

Nearer and nearer still,

Dislimned and fused into one sheeted blaze.

From out it fell a bloody drizzled shower,

Rained on that bad son's head descending fast,

Terror thereon aghast—he's down ! he's gone !

Darkness has swallowed up the scene convulsed.

A MOTHER'S BLESSING:

A Dramatic Poem.

PERSONS.

ROTHMOND.

EDGAR.

ARTHUR.

FRIAR CLEMENT.

ORPAH.

EDITH.

A SHEPHERDESS.

A MAD WOMAN.

ROBBERS.

Scenes laid in Scotland, before the Reformation.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Friar Clement's Cell.*

Friar Clement. If I were young; if thus I sought to
train

My youth to duty, shielding it from cares,
And from their possible blight, 'twere all unwise;
For comes exposure, then the tender-reared
Is like the lithe dull sickly grass that grows
'Midst thorns, without the knots and the short joints
Of strength; its shelter reft, livid it curls
And dies if once the wrinkled east-wind blow.
But I am old: I owe the world alone
The example of a putting-off of cares.
Yet not austere all, it may be done

With soothing foretastes, won from joy still mine
 To feel the beauty of heaven-lighted earth.
 Up in the sunny crystal air high hanging,
 The mountain woods green glistening of the May;
 The snowy cygnet by the borders dwelling
 Of lucid waters; to the sight upheaving
 Aye the fresh swelling sea; the pastoral hills
 Dappled with shadows, as the cloudy heavens
 Go bowing over them; day's dying glories,—
 These all are mine; then hushed and decent eve,
 Spirit-tempering stillness, or the sound of winds
 Going among the high tops of the trees.
 Then, with her moon forth comes the old solemn Night,
 Or starry-studded in her dark apparel;
 Then, blame unknown, and fear, stern soul-compellers,
 Sweet is my sleep within unquestioned doors.
 And thus the old man of God—such peace is won
 From the dear healing of Christ's wounded side—
 Keeping the eternal sabbath of the heart,
 Creeps up the quiet unmolested hill
 Of Contemplation to the high pure climes,
 Where the cleansed creatures in white vestments walk,
 With unimagined beauty on their faces.

*[He advances to ARTHUR, lying asleep in a corner,
 and wipes his brow.]*

Christ ease the trouble which lies very heavy
 On the distressed hinges of that heart!

Arthur (awaking). Thou man of God, where is she?

Fr. Cl.

Who?

Arth.

My sister.

Ha! dreams and mockery all! My poor drowned sister!

Fr. Cl. Your wounds wax well: a little farther rest,
 And you shall rise repaired.

Arth.

Ay; and cast off

The withered slough of my remembered being,
And forth come fresh and lubric as the spots
And slippery rings of the unsheathed tender serpent?
Shall sleep do this? Were I a thousand times
Dipped in the wholesome waters of the sea,
Could it do this? Or do you mean to give
The dull black wine of death, if that may do it?
Had I no sister had; were not my mother
A beggar going o'er the windy hills,
Fain for a piece of bread to stumble through
The sightless dark, or wandering by the stars,
I might be well perhaps. But—mock me not,
My soul is very sorrowful to death,

Fr. Cl. My dear young stranger—

Arth.

Ha! that name upbraids me;

'Tis just that thou shouldst know me, and thou shalt.

[*ARTHUR rises up and clothes himself with his mantle.*]

Fr. Cl. Nay then, what do you mean? Sure, not to go?

Arth. I'm well. I go. But hear me ere I go.
Rothmond perhaps you know: hard by he dwells
In the stern pride of his ancestral towers.
My father Edgar was his eldest son.
He wed my mother of a gentle line,
But now brought low. Fierce was my grandsire's wrath,
And forth he kept them from his house and love;
Adopting as his heir his second son,
Last of his issue, to uphold his name.
Be it so, then! My father was a man
To make a worthy house unto himself.
Steady and bold forth went he to achieve
His fortune on the seas, leaving his wife
With his twin children, Edith and myself.
We heard of him no more: we mourned him lost.

Scant grew our means. Now then for me to do !
The Western World was found : thither I'll go,
Gold and renown I'll win : thither I went.
We saw the boundless forests summer-swathed ;
And the great rivers, call them issuing seas,
With painted people on their idle shores.
Our souls were up : we fought from land to land.
Renown I won, and gold—gold for my mother's house.
But now, ah me ! in my wild whirl of life,
Caught by a love not wise, absorbed and blind,
My duties were forgot ; mother and sister,
To these I sent no tidings and no help :
Nor—this I since have learned—had they received
What in my just days I had sent to them.
Loosened from love by a heart-wrenching shock,
I hastened home ; our home was desolate :
My sister had been sick ; my mother forth
Begs for her, breadless. Shew me, tragic night,
When things unholy walk, and monstrous fears
Lay siege to the soul of man, a wo to match
That gracious mother out, when the gray cloud
Of years has gathered on her stricken head,
Standing in narrow lanes to ask an alms,
Weeping for me, and driven from haughty gates,
Hungry yet grudging, for her hungry child,
The morsel trembling to her own thin lips !
But where that child ? Down by the river brink
Edith is out for health. I sought her there.
Far through the woody glade I saw her met
By a dark youth : I knew him to be Hulin,
The kinsman, far removed, of Rothmond's house ;
But who, since Rothmond's second son was dead,
And that son's son, had been by him adopted.
I saw him turn and walk by Edith's side—

Help, man of God ! she's gone ! the sudden fiend
Has pushed her o'er the near precipitous bank.
The interval was as a flashing dream,
Till down the river's rock-tormented gulfs
Whirling I wrestled with their strangling strength—
In vain ; the flood had swept her to the sea,
Ne'er to be found by me, though day and night
I sought her body on the barren shore.

Fr. Cl. Can this be real ? or is it but a thing
Shaped from the surf of thy young brain o'erwrought ?

Arth. My eyes, and head, and heart grew cool and
clear,

Sheer onward bent. The villain fled away
From swift instinctive terror of my quest ;
But it was deadly, deadly ! Not high hills
Dividing kingdoms, blistered worlds of sand,
Rivers, nor fens, nor ocean many-voiced
Betwixt us, shall divide us ; through the pangs .
Of earthquake, through the twilight of eclipse,
Wading through blood, through fire, shall I o'ertake him,
Throughout the spinning reek of the high storms !
Back to this region came he—I came back.
Glory at last ! we met : you know the rest ?

Fr. Cl. Abroad one afternoon, I saw the winds
Fall on the vexèd forest of old pines,
Oft tearing up with all their cracking spurs
The enormous trees ; the cloak-wrapped traveller,
Dismounting, scudded down the blowing steep
With his oft-rearing horse, and hasted on ;
A tear rose in the wild wind's eye ; rains fell
Flooding the world ; I sought a sheltering tower
Shattered with years and ruin, there I sate
From its lorn windows looking far and wide.
I saw two enemies meet ; their swords are crossed ;

Starkly one falls ; the other reels above him,
 Staggering recovers, plants his foot, stoops, lifts
 His fallen adversary, bears him on,
 Stands on the rock that overhangs the river,
 And from his breast dashes him over—down.
 Ha ! no, he has not followed ; but he lies,
 Where he has fainted, o'er the cliff half drawn.
 Thence I recovered you.

Arth. But not so him,
 Destroyer of my sister ! From these hands
 Heaved, the great waters whelmed him, they devoured
 him.

His head, his feet, are away to the deep sea,
 Rolling commingled : Ne'er his bones shall rest ;
 Just Nature ne'er will let his little bones
 Repose in the sad clefts of the sea-caves :
 Them shall the under eddies hunt about,
 And bleach to nothing the mean relics !

Fr. Cl. Nay,
 This vengeful pride—

Arth. My pride is at an end.
 Yea, from this night, this hour, I swear to you,
 In foul attire—my punishment and penance—
 Laying upon me what my mother bore,
 To wander forth in life's distressful ways,
 As she has wandered, till I find her out
 Living, or learn on what dull bed she died.
 I owe thee this, my mother ; I have been
 Heedless of thee too long, avenging Edith.

Fr. Cl. Fain would I bid thee fear not for thy mother,
 Fain say it cannot be she begs her bread ;
 But since we dare not mark with bounds precise
 The chastening discipline of Heavenly love,
 I will but say I have at least a hope

Of good reserved for her, even in this world,
Whate'er her present lot—a hope derived
From the consummate beauty of her life,
But more especially from her filial youth,
Which won with such solemnities of awe,
So laid, so pressed, so sealed upon her head,
A MOTHER'S BLESSING.

Arth.

Did you know her then?

Fr. Cl. Yes. In an eastern dale, where then I dwelt,
There did I see thy mother Orpah first.
'Twas on a summer eve : a shower had fallen ;
Forth flushed the yellow sun ; hedges and trees
Twinkled with drops of light ; again abroad,
The noisy children waded in the gilt
And shallow pools ; the birds sang in the leaves ;
And cocks crowed lightly from the reeking farms.
Forth from her cottage came an old blind woman,
Whose hoary hair, smooth parted on her brow,
Was like the blossom of the almond-tree.
Her right hand leant upon a staff, her left
Was on a fair girl's shoulder : with slow steps
Measured, the damsel led her to a seat
Beside a small white dial on the green ;
And there they sate in the illumined eve.
But aye the maiden rose, seeing some flower
Moist gleaming in the grass, simple but sweet,
And gathered it, and brought it to her mother
That she might smell it—for she was her mother.
The violet for its smell, the scentless wildings
She plucked them for their beauty, crimson-tipped,
Or dropped with gold ; and, sitting by her mother,
With delicate freaks of fancy and of love,
Quaintly she put them in her dear white hair.
Trembled that blind old woman with the weight

Of a full heart, o'erburdened with its blessing ;
She laid her hand upon her daughter's head,
And praying to the shining light of God,
Which lighted all her face :—" My own true child !
Orpah, my last ! child of my blood and heart !
I'll bless thee now : Our good Lord Christ uphold thee .
All thy dear life ; and, past the grave's deep sleep,
Wake in His careful everlasting arms !"
Such was A MOTHER'S BLESSING on thy mother.

Arth. That faithful child ! dear fountain of my life !

Fr. Cl. How could I fail to mark her from that hour ?
The light step, the meek grace, the watchful love
With which she went about her mother's house,
Feeding, sustaining, cheering that old parent,
Reft of her husband, and twelve other children,
And having only this ewe lamb of love
To lie in her bosom, were to me divine.
Up lightly rose she, ere the lark arose
O'er the wide frosty meadows of the spring,
To do her careful work. The summer eve
Shone sweetly on her, as she sate and knit
By her old mother on the lowly bed
Of chamomile, or neighbouring woodland seat,
Loving the green society of trees.
Still was the autumn day : that mother lone
Sate in her house, which now was dark to her ;
But in her busy fancy aye she heard
The laughing voices and the running feet
Of children, filling all the house with life,
As in the days gone by, till came anew
The aching sense of present desolation,
And up she rose and felt with trembling hands
The old familiar things, to be assured
She still was dwelling in her early home ;

Then, groping forth upon her staff she stood
Long hours beneath the humming sycamore,
Listening the far-off shouts of happy children,
Gleaning by fits, but oftener idly climbing
The mountain-ashes round the harvest field,
Gathering wild hips, and running here and there
To drink from shaded wells with pipes of straw.
Alas ! she saw them not, but there she listened,
Till came her little gleaner home at eve,
Orpah, still working for her mother's bread.
Nor less when winter came that daughter wrought,
Spinning into the watches of the night,
So dutiful, that I have often deemed
Light Fairy hands took up the weary thread
From her still fingers, overta'en by sleep,
After the careful day and busy eve,
And spun for her who spun for her old mother.
Thus dignified by duty she upgrew
A stately, beautiful, and deep-souled woman.
But mark again THE BLESSING :—
Forth as I walked one sultry summer noon,
A cloud came sailing up against the wind,
Smothering the day ; a grim and breathless silence
Sunk on the moors ; creatures of earth and air
Seemed all withdrawn, save where the shifting wings
Of stormy sea-birds in the dun light, seen
Close coming o'er the mountains in their gloom,
Relieved the startled cloud with twinkling glimpses ;
Moaned the wild caves ; down all at once a wind
Came whewing from the hollow of the hill,
Lashing as with a whip the dreary rushes ;
Big drops of rain fell scattered ; forthwith burst
The flagrant lightnings and deep-bellied thunder.
But Orpah's cot was near, and gave me shelter,

There sate the virgin in her darkened house
Scarce seen, and sewed with many solemn tears
Her dying mother's shroud. The aged Christian
Sate up within her bed, and called her daughter;
And o'er her bowing low, "God's storms," she said,
"Are in the wide heavens, but His peace is here.
Bless thee, my child! thy love to me has been
Above the love of women, very great.
I go from thee, my lamb; but grieve not, fear not,
I leave thee on the fatherhood of God:
Through thunders loud, and many mighty waters,
He'll bear thee up: Our good Lord Christ uphold thee
All thy dear life; and, past the grave's deep sleep,
Wake in His careful everlasting arms!"
She said, and died. That moment from the cloud,
Wide rifted, came a glory of the sun,
Filling with sudden light that saintly bed,
Illumining that head serene in death,
And that young mourner, and her glistening tears,
As with a radiance from the face of God,
Bearing the assurance of His love divine.

Arth. Go on: Oh tell me all her precious life.

Fr. Cl. Thy father, hunting in those eastern dales,
Saw her, and, learning all her virtues, loved her,
And wed her in his passion, calm but deep.
I joyed to make them one. Long years passed by,
And we were far apart. Back then I came
To end my days here in my native dale.
Straightway I sought their dwelling: Near it sate
A damsel, on the cold autumnal eve,
By a small fountain in its rocky shell,
Fed from the crystal veins of a huge cliff
All moist and black above; a ruffled redbreast,
His jetty eye turned to the yellow west,

Trilled on the bare top of a small near tree,
By her unheard; nor when her urn o'erbubbled
With sweet clear water did she go away,
But sat looking afar to the wide west,
While many a tear fell from her glazed eyes,
Aye mingling with the cold blue drops that, slipping
From the green fringes of the rock, were blown
Against her cheek by the wind, as steadfastly
She looked for one that came not—Will he come?
Nay, will *they* come? for thou wert also gone:
This was thy sister Edith, looking far
For thee and for thy father—so I learned
As on she took me to her mother's house.
I saw them oft. Your father and yourself
They mourned as lost, all else seemed well with them.
Some months ago grief-stricken Edith pined.
I too was sick, and failed a while to see them;
Nor have I seen them since. Woe's me for Edith!
As for your mother, fear not, her we'll find.

Arth. For this I go: farewell. But I'll be back,
Lest blame be thine to have helped the homicide.

[*Exit* ARTHUR.]

FRIAR CLEMENT *stands a while looking out of his door.*

Fr. Cl. Would he were back! we'll have a night of
storms,
Worse than the watery day, so warm and heavy,
Closing now down on the fat oozing earth.
Up the low channels of the rivers lie
Rank mists, or creep into the shuddering woods.
From his dull cot the peasant looking forth,
Starts as the rushing of sonorous rain
Comes o'er the border fells; the thunder growls
Far in the south, and rolls its burden round

On the black heavy chambers of the west :
Blind smothering fears come o'er him ; shrinking half,
Half looking still throughout the struggling twilight,
He sees, or fancies in the low-hung clouds,
A thousand shapes that blast the unwholesome night
By cave, blue forest, or wide moorish fen ;
And hastes to bolt his door, and bless his peaceful bed.
[FRIAR CLEMENT *retires into an inner cell.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Moor, with Sheep feeding on it.*

Enter ARTHUR and a SHEPHERDESS, meeting.

Arth. Happy are you, my pretty Shepherdess,
So far and clear came your song o'er the wild.
Blush of young blood ! come tell me now how you
Can be so happy in these listless places,
Where nought is to be seen the livelong day,
But peevish stone-chats bobbing on the stone,
And solitary men in far-off mosses.

Shep. Ay, but these thriving sheep, and lambs at play,
Are not these something ? And glad summer days ?

Arth. And health ? And innocence ? And those young
eyes,
With going through the light and through the air,
As ether pure that feeds the vivid stars,
So beautifully sharp ? And peace and love
Found in the wilderness ? I stand reproved.
Forth come you singing through the morning gleam,
Over the purple acres of the moorland.

Nor know you grief, save when a lost lamb makes
Pity's sweet drops slide from your crystal eyes.
Nor fear is yours save when, at lurid noon,
Bursting the thunder rattles on the hills,—
Short-lived, for you are innocent : Up you spring,
Your mind serenely brightening as the day.
If slow to you lingers the golden eve,
You sit you down and watch your desert clock,
Counting the clear beads of the glassy wells,
Peace still producing peace ; until what time,
Their glittering breasts suffused with rosy air,
The high doves homeward to their windows shoot,
You seek your cottage by some flowery shaw,
And night's deep sleep receives you from the day.
Thrice fortunate Shepherdess ! did you but know
What he before you is ; how desolate she,
He wanders seeking ! What's yon form ? A woman ?

Shep. A poor lorn creature, somewhat crazed in mind,
Who all the day follows the silly sheep
Over the quiet fells, gathering the locks
Of wool, to work in the low winter nights.

Arth. God keep her ! I must see her : has she been
Beautiful in her youth ?—but that's long past !

Shep. Never even comely, but she can't help that.

Arth. 'Tis not my mother. Maiden, I seek my mother.
Cities I've searched for her, the wild sea-shores,
Rough quarries idle, dreary fens of rushes,
Forests, and wide unprofitable moors ;
Oft looking for her into pools of rivers.
But last night, when the rains fell heavily,
I saw a form on the dun plashy wild
Wearily, wearily going ; fast I ran,
But in a moment she had disappeared,
And there was nothing on the wide flat waste.

My senses are bewildered ! Yet I'll seek her,
Though I should light a candle and go search.
Damsel, her name is Orpah ; if you find her
Wandering this way, tell her I seek her thus,
And Father Clement's is my resting-place.
I've bid the people of a thousand hills
Do this for me ; travellers before the sun,
Wayfaring men that in the twilight haste,
Unquestioned pass not : surely at last we'll find her.
I'll be back soon ; keep watch, and I will bless you.
Shep. Trust me for that. *[Exeunt severally.]*

SCENE II.—*A Pathway through the Corn-fields, by a
River's side.*

FRIAR CLEMENT.

Fr. Cl. How each division of the plastic soil
Wears the true livery of its master's nature !
Were then the lords of earth but wise and gentle,
Our land might be a watered garden, full
Of blameless people and of all good fruits,
As in the glad days of the Golden Age.
Here dwells the owner of a wide domain,
'Mong his own people, as his fathers dwelt,
Remote from strife, in patriarchal ease,
Living and letting live ; and so his farms,
Lusty and rough with bearded crops of bread,
As in earth's virgin and spontaneous years,
Swarm with free life, and health, and happiness.
For, look and see it ; ay, and bless the sight !
Now are the days of wheat and barley harvest :
The reapers' hooks glint on the yellow uplands ;
Whoop little gleaners ; many barking dogs,

And the rough jingling of the farmer's wain
Hurrying afield adown the loosened slope,
Or homeward creaking through the sandy lane
Of dwarf elms feathered to the very heels,
Make up the cheerful din ; nor wants the hum
Of mealy beggar eating by the hedge.
The stack-yard rises. Here the sturdy swain,
His pitchfork o'er his shoulder, with his sleeve
Wipes from his brow the honourable sweat,
As burns the glistening sun, rather than shines,
Through a white gummy veil, say of thick air,
Rather than clouds, filling with sweltering heat
The day, as from an oven. There his boys,
Fair-haired and flushed, shake the meek orchard, down
Showering the pattering apples on the ground ;
Wild laughing girls gather them up in baskets.
But look across that narrow-running river,
And see another and contrasted scene :—
The grange, untenanted, sinks to decay.
Low comes the swallow through the shattered pane,
Where not of wood, or stuffed with an old hat.
The sheds are littered with the mingled straw
And rags of haunting gipsies : on the handle
Of the dismantled pump-well fluttering stripes
Of blankets hang. Yon cowering sheep diseased
In its dull corner, rank with nettle-wands
And seeded docks, has barked with tooth unwholesome
The scurfy stunted fruit-trees in the place
That was an orchard once, leaving its tufts
Of cankering wool upon the red peeled stumps.
O'er the wide thistly lands no form of life
Is seen, save where some solitary man,
Feeble and old, goes sauntering, filling up
With stakes the gaps of the unthriving hedges.

They show an owner harsh or ill at ease,
These lands unsightly: they are Rothmond's lands.

Enter ARTHUR.

Arth. If blame there be, I'm here.

Fr. Cl. No man has brought
A charge against you: be at ease for this.

Arth. At ease! O hermit, coming through last eve,
I saw the lovely daughters of the land
Walking on terraces and on balconies
In the rich light, with stringèd instruments,
Oft looking o'er the meads delectable,
At the fair children wading in the grass,
Pulling the wild flowers' spotted bells. Down fluttered
The airy creatures through the mellow orchards,
Gathering the golden apples in the sunset,
Beautiful, walking in the prosperous trees.
How I wept for my sister and my mother!
Why were they not in this glad light of day
All-happy too? That dear young sister lies
Whelmed in sad waters, wo is unto me!
And where's my mother? I have found her not,
Though I have sought her from the simple hills
Down to the city dens where huddled lie
Age, Vice, and Guilt, babes in their milkless wail,
And all the crooked family of Pain.
The very lazar-house I have not missed;
Nor the strait mad-house, searching it throughout
The groans and blasphemies of disjointed spirits,
Laughter unbounded, strokes, and many cries.
Shade of my mother, if thou'rt dead, hear this!
If living, weary creature, where art thou?
Oh! all the hoards of thy exhaustless heart,
Heaped on my boyhood, turned to fruitless ashes!

Thou livedst to think thy one son did forsake thee !
O'er melancholy hills, by moonlight hedges
Wandering, the thought filled thy astonished heart ;
And tears for this did moisten thy frail bread.
Then lying low on thy strange bed of death,
Oft didst thou raise thy head—it ne'er was I ;
Day or night never came I unto thee.
Wild world of man ! what next ? what have we here ?

[*Mad MARTHA runs shrieking down the river's
side, looking into it.*

Fr. Cl. The Woman of the River, poor mad Martha.
Forth from the outcast chambers of the rocks,
Where windy mists whistle through their forced rifts,
Issues the haggard creature with a scream,
Wringing her hands, down to the river's brink.
Her eyes intently fixed upon its flow,
Fast she outruns the current, bending oft
To scan the black depths of the wheeling pool ;
Nor seldom plunging in she wades the stream.
What looks she for ? Some years ago, she nursed
An orphan, Rothmond's grandson and sole heir :
Too near that river on a sultry day
Heedless she slept ; awakened by a cry,
There was her young charge rolling down the wave !
She shrieked, she sprung, she plunged, she snatched at
him,

In vain ; he perished, and she scarce was saved
From death, to be the maniac that you see.
Vain was forgiveness, pity, care ; by day
Resting, nor yet by night, with piercing prayers
She sought her nursling from the fatal flood.
Nor when the love of friends removed her far,
That she might rest from the forgotten scene,
Was she at peace ; back to her yearning haunt

O'er moors she ran, and solitary hills,
 As with the instinct of a thing bereaved.
 Hers the wild benefit of the cave, she sleeps
 Her fitful sleep, then hurries to that bank
 Through all the seasons of the changeful year.
 If down the current pass a floating rag,
 Her heart absorbed o'erfills her dazzled eyes,
 Blind from their very eagerness of gaze ;
 Stumbling she runs down the unequal shore,
 Screaming :—" 'Tis he ! 'tis he !" God pity her !
 She would not give his bleached little cheek
 For all the living things of this great world.

Arth. Poor faithful one ! But take me to thy place ;
 There where clear thoughts and holy quiet be,
 I'll rest one night, and rise unto my quest.

Fr. Cl. Come then, my son.

Arth. Would I, like thee, were anchored
 At peace within some little hermitage.
 Oh blessed they who wisely musing turn
 To sweetest uses all the forms of nature ;
 Whether young Spring, the leafy architect,
 Is in the woods and builds her green device ;
 Or genial Summer melts her gracious cloud,
 Dropping down fatness on the earth's glad furrows,
 Swelling the young wheat with the milk of bread,
 With sweet warm liquor cleaving the moist hoods
 Of bursting flowers that live i' the purpled meadows ;
 Or costly Autumn shears her yellow crofts ;
 Or Winter, slinging his fierce hail about,
 Thrashes as with a flail the forests bare !
 War, Famine, Pestilence, tell them their design ;
 The Earthquake shows the secret of her mine ;
 To them the Comet his wan hair unbinds ;
 They know the errands of the mighty winds ;

The thunder-stone ; and meteors of the storms,
That plough the dark night with their fiery forms.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*Friar Clement's Cell.*

FRIAR CLEMENT *is discovered reading by the light
of his lamp.*

Arth. (awaking from his bed in a corner).

What hour is't, holy Sir?

Fr. Cl.

The faintest gray

Is in the east. Rest thee. Sleep is for Youth,
While Age is up with the bird. I'll waken thee
When the day comes upon the mountain-tops.

Arth. Say rather that this mortal state of ours
Has nothing better than this soothing rest,
And I'll believe thee, and lie still. O life !
Even there where dwell the old simplicities
In country places, heaviness of heart
Dwells with them. Try we boyhood : is it happy ?
Over the tufted common yonder comes
A rural thing, and as he comes he sings.
Springing upon his staff, he overleaps
The blossomed whins, light as the morning lark.
Along the glistening herbage audibly eat
His cows, nor wander yet ; so with his dog
Wide running he can leave them at their will.
The grasshoppers that from his brushing shoon
Start all around away like jointed sparks,
He heeds not ; climbing to the hermit well,
That with its clear eye and green floating beard
Looks from the eastern-sided hill, and sees
The early sun : slipping in crystal drops,

The beautiful water trickles sliding down
The polished rushes, freshening with cold bubbles
The vivid grass below. Down on his knee,
That feels the chillness of the oozing moisture,
Bending he drinks ; then to the velvet turf
Of Sabbath pathway leading o'er the hills
Hastes ; sitting there he carves the lettered sod,
Till fancy has her fill. But now o'er cast,
The changeful Autumn day brings o'er his heart
An equal gloom, so vacant are his hours,
His task so slight to turn the wandering kine,
Running behind his dog that barks against
The blowing wind. What time the shepherd comes
Down from the hill, he sucks his gurgling bottle,
Draining the milk. What next shall be his sport ?
The wild bees, flying high and straight away,
Alight not to be caught on the dry moor ;
The year's last butterflies sit dull and tarnished
On dewless flowers, not worthy to be ta'en ;
Oft has he made the urchin swim the pool,
But now before him laid the prickly clew
Unheeded stirs, and shows his cautious nose ;
The rushes white and green are pulled and platted ;
His knife lies idle by the listless branch ;
His crammed dog gambols not ; there are no more
Rabbits to snare ; and he is tired of hunting
The slender weasels in the mossy dikes.
Then is he wretched : to the distant road
He runs to ask the traveller what's the hour ;
He sees the far-off children, from the tree
He shouts to them—they hear or heed him not.
Long hours till evening ! then he loses heart ;
The tears are in his eyes ; he lays him down
Wrapped in his plaid, and sobs beneath the hedge

To the cold shuddering sough that creeps through it,
And the shrill shrew-mouse running through the grass.
So much for boyhood.

Try we next the swain,
Whose life be-praised palls through each rhyming
ballad :—

If dry the summer, heaven is bound with brass,
Ne'er to be loosened by the slipping rains ;
His pastures languish ; crops ! you might as well
Upbind a torch in every harvest sheaf.
Fat showers have fallen : he on his upland crofts
With knowing stride steps through his bearded rye,
His silky barley waving whitely green,
His wheaten hollows with their blessed spikes,
His beans, his vetches, his pea-blossomed leas ;
Yet, standing in a sea of corn, he talks
Of darnel, thistles, poppies, corn-rose, charlock,
With rueful stories of the slaving Spring
Rotting his seed—is thankless and unpleased.
Canker and care ! vanity all ! Let's sleep !
Father, 'twere best to sleep !

Fr. Cl.

'Twill draw from sleep
A fresher dew, to bear upon thy heart
The picture, counter to thy peevish swain,
Of happy labour in the moonlit yard,
We saw last night—a rustling harvest night.
The wain, subduedly creaking, prest with sheaves,
Shadowy came on along the glittering road,
Whose ruts with sable silver were all polished.
The low-hung moon upon the southern fell,
Skirting the doddered trees, poured her wide light.
The shepherd lad home coming from the hill,
With his clear whistle, overleapt the dike,
And tumbling, rose laughing from the crushed ferns

Through the pure bracing night, to join the maidens
That with their gleesome laughter at his cost
Made all the barn-yard echo. Round his stack
Half-built, with keen eye went the husbandman,
And with his pitchfork nicely fashioned it.
Forth from it came he, and stood widely off
As came his crushing wain : heavily swayed,
Turning it cast a sheaf ; this, from the door
His chubby boy forth sallying seized and raised
With toil unfeigned, and mimic pantings loud ;
Half bearing it, half trailing it, he drew
The wheaten burden, bigger than himself,
And fell upon it at his father's feet.
No lot of man but has its side of light.

Arth. Come now, the beggar, can you speak for him,
Or rather *her* ? Nay, let us draw a veil
Over poor outcast mothers—we'll say *him*.
Yon gray scarred man, he fought his country's battles ;
And his reward is—leave to beg his bread
Throughout the thankless land he helped to save.
The cross winds vex his head ; the sulphurous gloom,
Riven by the flaming wedges of the thunder,
Bursts on his blinded face. O'er hungry heaths,
By moorland farms, wandering, and lonely mills,
He finds his shelter, and his dole of food,
In some permitted nook. There now he sits,
With many a stealthy glance at the big dame
Who ranges through the house, and scolds her maids
The louder for her hospitality :
This feels the old man, as demure he sits,
Eating his little portion noiselessly.
Nor loses he the chance when, thanks repaid,
Her mitigated voice comes from the pantry ;
Forth steals he modestly, still further glad

To pass unroused the mastiff's half-shut eye ;
The gate behind him clanks not ; nor he stops,
Nor turns to look till he has gained the road.
This is the best the beggar's life can boast of,
The very best ; for we have given him bread,
Where many starve : Ah, wo is me for them !
And thou, the mother of my blood and being,
Forgive this sorry idleness of speech !
Why am I here ? There goes the gleam of morn,
And I must work.

[ARTHUR *springs up, prepared to set out.*

Fr. Cl. Nay, then, here be our apples,
Honey, and cakes ; we'll eat in the sweet air,
And I'll go on with you a little way.

[*Exit ARTHUR, followed by FRIAR CLEMENT with
a small basket.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Outskirts of a Forest.*

Enter ARTHUR.

Arth. Boreas, bleak chamberlain, that mak'st my bed,
Robbing the elms, thou art the kindest fellow
In all the north.

[*He lies down, and sleeps among leaves at the root
of a tree.*

Enter EDGAR.

Ed. Orpah, and ye twin children of my heart,
Am I not near you now ? Oh, are they living,

Or are they dead? (*Discovering ARTHUR.*) A man among
the leaves?

Asleep unsheltered on an eve like this?

Up, friend. Why thus? What are you?

Arth. (starting up). One self-doomed;
In festering cities, burrowing down through all
The spawn of Sin that quickens in the night;
Making me fellow with the freckled children,
Brood o' the wild hedge-nurse; with swarming beggars;
Strollers; infesting gipsies; roaring sailors;
With blind, gnarled, sun-bronzed minstrels; sly, lame
creatures,

Tender of foot as is the borrowed horse,
But swift before the beggar-compelling baton;
With remnant soldiers of old wars; with jugglers;
Lunatics; wandering boys; all homeless things;
All furious outcasts; all degraded bastards;—
With these oft sheltered 'neath the howling bridge,
In barns wind-visited, or in dull vaults,
Where drop upon your sleepless eyes rank sweats
From leathern wings of filthy flitter-mice,
Half-formed, and clustering in a blistered stew
About the roof.

Ed. Your words are all too wild,
Wild as your bed.

Arth. This bed! I'll sleep no more
In such dry luxury: I'm on my way
Down to the low damp forest, where the peeled,
Fat, clammy ground for ever reeks; the rill
Scarce soaks its way through the dead choking leaves;
Where the toad, gross and lazy, squatted sits
Amidst the soapy fungi, and distends
The spotted leather of his wrinkled throat
With minute puffs from his asthmatic lungs.

There let me sleep, or in the marish-pool !
What right have I to all these good dry leaves,
When those I love, my manly father first,
Are lying in the bottom of the seas,
And in the rivers, and—I know not where !
Where, mother, where? The flickering west's blown out ;
Day's gone to bed : Where wanders, or where lies
That good gray head? Come to me, good gray head !
Grave stranger, fare thee well. [Exit ARTHUR.

Ed. There is a savage riot in his words,
From some great stress of mind. Bear must we all.
[Exit.

SCENE II.—*Friar Clement's Cell.*

FRIAR CLEMENT—*Enter* ROTHMOND.

Roth. Peace! Man of God, I come
With other thoughts than in my days of pride.
Rumours have reached me that my grandson Arthur
Is in these parts, and that you know of him.
Would I could find him!

Fr. Cl. Wandering round, he seeks
His mother still in filial hope, in penance,
In the wild luxury of self-abasement.

Roth. She dwells with me. You wonder. Palsy-struck,
Down by the wood I fell; she found me there,
As forth she wandered begging; help she brought;
She held my head herself, as home they bore me:
And unto me she ministered as a daughter.
Restored to consciousness, and humbler now,
My heart grew as a father's, and I prayed her
To leave me not, but live with me for aye.
Her decent pride, for outcast Edgar's sake,
Could ill endure the place denied to him;

But Edith came, and ere the maid and I,
Sore-smitten both, could be restored to strength,
Allowing her to go, my prayers had won
Pardon for all the past, and filial love :
And now they dwell with me, my own dear children.

Fr. Cl. Did you say Edith? This is passing strange !
But know you aught of Hulin ?

Roth. Whither gone,
And why, unless he thought a certain crime
Discovered, I can't guess.

Fr. Cl. He's in the waters.
Thy grandson saw his deed, and with fell quest
Hunted and smote him down, and to the river
Gave his dead body.

Roth. Let him perish so,
And those who loved him seek him and avenge him !
Edith has told me all. You know it too ?

Fr. Cl. But how was Edith saved ?

Roth. The o'erboiling flood
Bore her light-whirled into a sandy creek,
And laid her high and clear behind a rock.
There poor mad Martha, whom no doubt you know,
Found her that night I rallied from my shock.
Whether the maniac-creature saw in her
Some kindred features of her long-lost charge,
Or from whatever instinct wild but true,
Bearing the half-drowned damsel in her arms,
With desperate might she dashed into my chamber,
And madly laughing laid her at my feet.
"Is she not thine? God help me, I can find
No other child!" she cried, and burst away.
Sore bruised was Edith, but she soon recovered.

Fr. Cl. Hulin, dark villain, I can guess his motive.

Roth. He saw that I relented, for I deemed

Edgar and Arthur lost, and wished to take
Orpah and Edith to my house and heart ;
So, to maintain himself my heir, he strove
To keep them still shut out. How he cut off
The means of Orpah's life, to drive her far,
Beggared and hopeless, from the neighbourhood,
I've traced it all. Edith he met by chance,
And, doubtless by compendious guilt at once
To reach his purpose, pushed her o'er the cliff.
But now she's safe ; her mother too : all's well.
I joy to tell thee all, for thou hast been
Their friend unchanging through the change of days :
But for our sickness we had told thee sooner.
I said, All's well ; 'tis not so till we find
Our Arthur. Gallant has his bearing been
In the far West : I've heard of it with joy.

Fr. Cl. Pangs for a loss of love, wo for his mother,
Anguish for what he deems his sister's fate,
Work in his brain like madness ; but his soul
Is honour's mould ethereal. I do hope
He'll soon be here ; gladly, how gladly then
I'll bring him to his own true home at last.

Roth. Oh yes. Farewell.

[*Exit* ROTHMOND. FRIAR CLEMENT *retires into*
his inner cell.

SCENE III.—*An open place in the Forest : Rocky dells on*
each side.

Enter ARTHUR.

Arth. High overhead the moon, crags with their jags
Of splintered silver, slants of falling light
Down the blue glooms, streams with their sudden flash
From darksome nooks, the same as when of old

I joyed to wander in these glimpsing woods!
 On such a night might Oberon and his train,
 Seeking or shunning Queen Titania,
 On the green parks or solitary sands
 Glance trippingly; or from these shadowy rifts
 Of tusky-rooted trees peep quaintly forth.
 Ay, ay, all this is beautiful; and yet
 Who, knowing man, knows not this lovely hour
 Is stained by him? Forth come the things of guilt
 To affront the holy beauty of the moon:
 There hangs Despair, and gasps away his life;
 Here glaring Murder hides his dropping knife;
 To Theft, to Lust, the shadowy hour is dear;
 And Treason's eyes throughout the night are clear.

[Cries for help are heard. ARTHUR runs out.]

SCENE IV.—*Another part of the Forest.*

ROTHMOND *is seen attacked by two Robbers*—ARTHUR
comes in armed with a stick.

Arth. Two upon one! Foul play, I fear me, then.
 Masters, stand back! Come now, sweet Sirs, be off!
 You won't? Nay then, take that! and that! and that!

[The Robbers are driven back by ARTHUR'S vigorous strokes, and at last make off.]

Roth. (advancing to ARTHUR). My brave deliverer, art thou hurt for me?

Arth. Ha! Rothmond? Well, my hand at least has been

Nature's just instrument: be it so, then!

No, Sir, I'm safe: I trust you are so too?

Roth. Can it be he? Are you my grandson Arthur?

Arth. I am the son of Edgar: for his sake
 I'll guard you to your gates, and leave you there.

Roth. Come then, my son. But, ere we reach our gates,
I humbly hope to win thee to go in. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*An Apartment in ROTHMOND'S Castle.*

ORPAH *is seen seated on a couch, and* EDITH
near a window.

Orp. The moon shines clear. Look out. Blest day,
we've heard
Our dear boy's still alive ! So near us too !
Would Rothmond were but come ! He scarce can fail
To bring us news of Arthur. You see something ?
Edith. Two men are coming from the moonlit wood.
Rothmond's the one : he leans upon the other.
Can it be he ? No—yes. But here they are.

Enter ROTHMOND and ARTHUR.

Arth. My honoured mother ! I have sought thee long.
[*Embracing her.*]

Orp. My lost ! my gladly found !

Arth. My own twin-half !
[*Embracing* EDITH.]

Enter a Servant.

Ser. The Friar, my Lord, craves entrance with a
stranger.

Roth. Welcome his blessed feet ! Let him come in.

Enter FRIAR CLEMENT and EDGAR.

Fr. Cl. I come thus late to bring you one friend more,
Won from the far lands of lost men to you.

Roth. Is this a vision ? Am I sick again ?
Orpah, is this not he ?

Orp. Lord of my life !
 O wondrous night ! my husband !
[She falls into his arms. When she recovers, he leads her, almost fainting, to the couch.]

Ed. Fear not, my wife, I'll never leave thee more !
 Ta'en by the Moors, what long long weary years
 I wore away ! Patience ! I'm free at last !
 Now then for home ! 'Tis desolate ! But I found
 This Friar, old friend and true : He made me come
 With filial confidence within these gates.
 My honoured father, let me kneel to thee
 And crave thy blessing ! *[Kneels to ROTHMOND.]*

Roth. Be it on thy head !
 Rise up, my son : all's well : dear children all !
 My house is now complete, and whole, and round.

Ed. These are my twins ? My Arthur, dear ! my
 Edith !
 Come to your father's heart ! *(He embraces them.)* I cannot tell

How much I love you both ! Ha ! but I've lost
 My pair of little ones I left behind ;
 Yet who have lived in my remembering heart
 All these long years, and never grown an inch.
 Well, well, I let them go, and take you for them ;
 Though I have missed the joys of your sweet springing,
 A much-defrauded father : O my children !

Fr. Cl. I go, but ere I go, let me remind thee,
 My daughter Orpah, of thy MOTHER'S BLESSING,
 Which still is mighty, fighting on thy side.
 Nay, I do bless this house with that good blessing :
 I bless you all :—" *Our good Lord Christ uphold you
 All your dear lives ; and, past the grave's deep sleep,
 Wake in His careful everlasting arms !*"

[Exit FRIAR CLEMENT, and the Scene closes.]

MONOGRAPH OF A FRIEND.

KINGS from their thrones are hurled.
 Beauty is wed to Use.
 There lies he on the skirts of the great world,
 Undisciplined, aimless, loose,—
 In negligent grandeur loose.
 Our golden-haired, our Orpheus dumb,
 List thy glory yet to come :—
 " Rolling through the thoughtful ages,
 Song of our Heir of Bardic Sages,
 Majestic how it rolls along,
 That far-related planetary Song !"
 Child of our Promise of this great To-Be,
 He flouts it all beneath the Forest Tree.
 Hopeless love is but a fit ;
 Leave him yet, leave him yet.
 Hush ! in the audience-chamber of his soul
 Stand the Solemnities : they claim him whole.
 Behold him now ! that kingly brow,
 That eye compact of purpose true ;
 And waving wide his locks of pride,
 Our Titan up to dare and do.
 He dared and did. He won the palm.
 Law to himself, he ruled desire.
 An Iceland alp, his high white calm
 Sleeps on the wells of fire.

THE CHURCHYARD.

Night the First.

WITH a quick imperfect shriek,
 Rose the thin embodied reek.
 Like a thing pursued, it fled
 From the kingdoms of the dead,
 Through the green silent vales
 (As the moon unclouded sails),
 O'er the dewy-hazèd hill,
 Through the forest deep and still,
 By the river's sandy shore,
 By the gray cliffs gleaming hoar,
 Through the fens, and through the floods
 Of the fruitless solitudes,
 Far to flee through night away
 To the healthful coasts of day.

Back shuddering, shimmering, o'er its grave it sate ;
 Another ghost was near, and thus they mourned their
 fate :—

FIRST GHOST.

O dim unbodied land !
 Joy dwells not there, even pain is at a stand.
 A smothering presence fills the air around
 Of patience dumb, and fears without a sound.

SECOND GHOST.

The Heavenly Watchers where,
That deigned for man to cleave the morning air,
And stooping closed, glad message to fulfil,
Their golden wings on many a glorious hill;
And in earth's green and patriarchal days
With converse joyed our fathers' hearts to raise,
Beneath broad tented trees, blessing their state
With great approval, interdiction great?

FIRST GHOST.

Far other state is ours ! No simple grace
Of life primeval, no green dwelling-place !
Sun there, nor moon, nor ether molten blue,
Valley, nor tufted hill divides the view,
Nor lucid river, on whose borders blow
Flowers many-hued, and trees of stature grow :
Nor leafy summer, nor the stormy glee
Of winds, when winter falls upon the sea,
With change delights us : nor returning morn,
Nor face of man relieves that sad sojourn.

SECOND GHOST.

Were men but wise ! Did but Ambition know
The flat endurance of our listless wo,
How to his soul would triumph be denied,
How slacked the spasms of his o'ertorturing pride,
Spun from the baffled heart ! Oh, how would fail,
Fires of blood and Passions pale !

FIRST GHOST.

Behold the goodly pattern of yon heaven !
Beneath yon moon becalmed the woodlands lie.

By dogs of chase the desert creature driven,
Climbs up the rocky stairs of mountains high;
With sealing light she touches his wild eye,
And all the bliss of slumber is for him.
So sweet yon moon to earth! Sweeter to me
Life fresh of blood would be;
'Twould fill my heart with joy up to the trembling brim.

SECOND GHOST.

What though the churchyard, by the glimmering light,
Pours forth the empty children of the night;
O'er seas and lands we flit, but back are fain
To troop dishonoured to our place again.
Vain privilege! it serves us but to show
The joy that we for ever must forego.

FIRST GHOST.

O the glad earth! no more, ah! never, there
With chaste clear eyes we'll drink the morning air,
Breathed through the sweet green saplings of the spring,
Fresh by the water-courses flourishing!
No more from cooling shades, at noon of day,
We'll watch the crystal waters slide away;
Till come still evening with her drops of dew,
And her large melting moon hung in the southern blue!

SECOND GHOST.

From out the west a haze of thick fine rain
Comes o'er green height, high rock, and smoking plain,
Flies lightly drifted o'er the dimmèd floods,
And shakes its sifted veil upon the woods.
Forth looks the sun, the impearled valley fills
With seeds of light, and sleeks the slippery hills.
Nor yet the showery drops away have ceased
To fall, clear glancing on the darkened east,

When o'er them cast, with saffron horns the Bow
Of Beauty melts the fluid woods below.
With glittering heads, down in the grassy plain
The milk-white herds feed onward in a train ;
Sheep nibbling up, goats on the higher slopes,
The shepherds stand upon the mountain-tops.
O beauty ! O the glory of the hour !
What living spirit could resist your power ?
Not mine ; far less it could when rustling through
The crimped translucent cups of leaves, with dew
And sunshine overflown, my love first stood in view.
What tranquil might upon that forehead lies !
How pure the spirit that refines those eyes !
Joy dwelt in her, as light dwells in the stone,
Dear to my heart, but now for ever gone.
God, do but clear her from the grave's foul stains,
Pour back the branching blood along her veins,
Build up that lovely head ! Oh let her rise,
Let youth's fine light revive within her eyes !

FIRST GHOST.

Forks of fire, heaven's floodgates pouring,
Crushed and jammed the thunders roaring,
My bride of beauty by my side
Shrinking, we were touched—and died !
What means this death ? O God upon Thy throne,
Give us the day ; we'll let Thee not alone !
From floods, and fields, and ways, arise, ye ghosts,
Tribes of dusk time ! kingdoms ! unnumbered hosts !
No more of sufferance ! upward let us flee
To God's own gates, and pray the end to be.
Why fear the light ? Why fear the morning air ?
Fill we His skies with shrieks, and he must hear our
prayer.

SECOND GHOST.

Strong is His arm ; it o'er that Power prevailed
Who rose with darkness and His Heavens assailed,
And drove him out, far kindling, as he fell,
Around his head the virgin fires of Hell.
His very eye could clear us all away,
Chase us into the grave, and seal us with the clay.
Hush ! breathe not of it, lest for aye He change
To blind obstruction this our nightly range.

FIRST GHOST.

Lo ! through the churchyard comes a company sweet
Of ghosted infants—who has loosed their feet ?
Linked hand in hand, this way they glide along ;
But list their softly-modulated song :—

SONG OF THE CHURCHYARD CHILDREN.

Our good Lord Christ on high
Has let us forth a space,
To see the moonlit place
Where our little bodies lie.
Back He will call us, at His dear command
We'll run again unto the happy land.

O'er each unblemished head
No thunder-cloud unsheaths its terrors red ;
Mild touching gleams those beauteous fields invest,
Won from the kingdoms of perpetual rest.
Stony Enchantment there,
Nor Divination frights ;
Nor hoary witch with her blue lights,
And caldron's swarming glare.

How they shudder down to smoke
At the crowing of the cock,
And the fat absorbing ground
Drinks them up without a sound !

Night the Second.

A brooding silence fills the twilight churchyard ;
Not even the bat stirs from her cloistered rift,
Nor from her tree the downy-muffled owl,
To break the swooning and bewildered trance.
A crowding stir begins ; the uneasy Night
Seems big with gleams of something, restless, yearning,
As if to cast some birth of shape from out
Her hutching loins upon the waiting earth.
The smothered throes are o'er, the birth is out
In glistening ghosts. Thinned and relieved, the air
Lends modulation to their spiritual meanings :—

FIRST GHOST.

Disembodied, we on high
Dwell in still serenity.
Name not faculty nor sense,
Where the soul's one confluence
Of light divine, and love, and praise,
From the Lord's unsealèd ways.
Yet we the waiting dust would don,
With our dear bodies clothed upon ;
Loving (for He wears the same)
Jesus through our earthly frame :
Then should we sit at Jesus' feet,
Then our Heaven should be complete.

Therefore, for the body's sake,
Oft its thin semblance do we take,
Quick-fashioned from our Paradise,
Thus to revisit where it lies.
And flitting through the night we're fain
To see our mother earth again.

SECOND GHOST.

O'er the shadowy vales we go,
O'er the eternal hills of snow,
O'er the city, and its cries
Heard from Belial's nightly sties,
And deserts where no dwellers be,
O'er the land and o'er the sea ;
Round the dark, and all away,
Touching on the hem of day.

THIRD GHOST.

I had a wife, what earnest-trembling pen
Shall tell her love for me ? what words of men ?
Spouse of my heart and life ! how harsh the pain
To go from thee, and from our children twain !
Unborn unto his sorrowful entail,
The unconscious third could not his loss bewail ;
Yet nature reached him when his father died :
Fed on blind pangs within thy widowed side,
And dry convulsive sorrow, bitter food,
He took a deeper stamp of orphanhood,
Than if, life-conscious, he had seen me die,
And wept with many waters of the eye.
This very eve I heard my wife, where she
In saintly calm dwells with our children three ;
Their low sweet voices of my name were telling :
Oh how I yearned around their little dwelling !

I could not enter in, I could not make
My presence known, one kiss I could not take !
Yet I rejoice, the Heavenly Watch are keeping
Their nightly vigil o'er the dear ones sleeping.

FOURTH GHOST.

Guard the young lambs, ye Angels ; Jesus bids,
Who laid His hand on little children's heads !
From Sin defend them, Thou, O Spirit Good !—
None other can—from Sin still unsubdued,
Plague still permitted ! Here wide-glorying Crime
Slays half the kingdoms of man's mortal time ;
There Pleasure's form belies the ancient pest,
For whom in sackcloth must the worlds be dressed :
She drugs the earth ; then by fierce gleams of haste
The false allurements of her eye displaced,
By scorn, by cruel joy her prey to win,
The hoary shape of disenchanted Sin,
Above the nations bowed beneath her spell,
Seals the pale covenant of Death and Hell.

FIFTH GHOST.

From the dungeon, from the cave,
From the battle, from the wave,
From the scaffold and its shame,
From the rack, and from the flame,
From the lava's molten stone,
Like a river coming on,
From the Samiel hot and swift,
From the earthquake's closing rift,
From the snow-waste's faithless flaws,
From the monster's rending jaws,
From the famished town, possess
By the blue and spotted pest,

From the lazar-house of pain,
From the mad-house and its chain,—
Day and night, day and night
(Could we hear its gathered might),
What a cry, what a cry,
Prayer, and shriek, and groan, and sigh
(Even the dumb have burst to speech,
In strong yearnings to beseech),
Has gone up to Heaven from earth,
Since that curse of Sin had birth !

SEVENTH GHOST.

The glistening infant dies in its first laugh,
Like flower whose fragrance is its epitaph.

SECOND GHOST.

Let the sweet fable tell
Of Aphrodite in her rose-lipped shell,
Fresh from the white foam of the morning sea
Into the birth of beauty ; ne'er was she
A lovelier emanation to the sight,
Than earth's young virgin in her dewy light.
But see her now !—a faded drooping thing
(When gleam through sleet the violets of the Spring),
Shuddering and shrinking o'er Death's misty jaws,
They suck her down, the shade of what she was !

THIRD GHOST.

Yon strenuous youth—a soul of thoughtful duty,
Clothed with heroic beauty—
Look how he scales, so high and clear aloof,
The tops of purpose to the sons of proof.
Death strikes the towering mark,
And slings his name for ever down the dark.

FIRST GHOST.

Would the body's death were all
Might the sons of men befall !
But where the spent assault of light
In crystal tremblings dies away
Into the spongy waste of night,
Beyond it I had power to stray :
Far beyond the voice of Thunder,
Through the silent Lands of Wonder,
As they wait the birth of Being,
I was given the power of seeing ;
And I saw that baleful place,
For the outcasts of our race.
On the scathed shore, as of a flood
Of fire, a naked creature stood,
Forlorn ; and stooping, with his hand
He wrote along the barren sand
Things of remembered earth : His frame
Shook, as he wrote his mother's name.
A noise like coming waves ! and lo !
Gleams of a fiery-crested flow !
The molten flood with crowding sway,
Near, nearer, licked those lines away ;
Then rising with a sudden roar
(The levelled mist streamed on before),
With horns of flame pushed out, it chased
That being o'er the sandy waste ;
Till turning round, with blasphemies
Glaring from out his hollow eyes,
He dared the wrath which, ill defied,
Went o'er him with its whelming tide.
And sights and sounds I cannot name,
Were in that sore possessing flame.

And, ever down from worlds unseen,
(Wrath, wrath beyond what yet hath been !)
Thunderings, and hissings as of rain
Wading through fire, were heard amain.
O place of anguish ! place of dread !
Veil the eyes, and bow the head !

SECOND GHOST.

A change comes o'er the night ; 'how gracious soft
This light of upper earth to that sad dwelling !
The firmament is full of white meek clouds,
And in them is the moon ; slowly she sails,
Edging each one with amber, as she slides
Behind it, and comes out again in glory.
Darkness falls like a breath, and silent brightness
Touches the earth, alternately : how sweet !

THIRD GHOST.

But who is this her vigil keeping
O'er a grave ?

FOURTH GHOST.

The maid is sleeping.
With her old widowed father she
Dwells in her virgin purity,
Young staff of reverence 'neath his weighed years,
Eyes to his dimness, safety to his fears.
And oft when he retires to rest,
She, with her holy thoughts possess,
Comes hither at the shut of day,
To muse beside her mother's clay.
Here once more to muse and weep,
Wearied she hath fallen asleep.

FIFTH GHOST.

Filial piety, how sweet !
Kiss her head, and kiss her feet !

SIXTH GHOST.

May these kisses, dove, infuse
Power to bear the nightly dews !

FOURTH GHOST.

She would fold her arms, and go
To the dark of death below ;
Might but a space her mother be
Let up the gladsome day to see.

SIXTH GHOST.

But with eternal sanctity
In that mother's soul and eye,
What to her were all the mirth,
Pomp, and glory of the earth ?

SEVENTH GHOST.

Glistening, solemn, sealed from sin,
She to her spouse at eve comes in.
O that meeting ! Does she live ?
Milk and honey he would give.
A holy joy, but no excess,
Through her pure body passionless
Thrillingly goes, to hear that voice
Which made her wedded days rejoice.
In silence gazing still on him,
Till tears her spiritual eyes bedim,
Sweet murmurs bless him ; round she flings
A glance on old remembered things ;

Another gaze on him ; and then
She's vanished from the world of men.

FIRST GHOST.

Lo ! on the maiden's knee the Book of Life !
Kiss every leaf—kiss every wondrous leaf !
The charter of the Paradise we've won,
And Heaven we hope for—kiss each blessed leaf !

SECOND GHOST.

Had we, some eighteen hundred years ago,
Been passing through a certain Eastern village,
We might have seen a fair-haired little boy
Stand at his mother's door, in no rude play
Joining His fellows ; grave, but holy sweet
Of countenance. Who's that little boy ? The God
Who made the worlds—the very God of Heaven !

THIRD GHOST.

Love to man, and great salvation !
Wondrous, wondrous Incarnation !

FOURTH GHOST.

Ever going to His bed,
At His little feet and head
Looks His mother, laden she
With her burdened mystery ;
Still with tears of wonder weeping
O'er the mystic infant sleeping :
He's her son, but He's her Lord !
O the blessed, blessed Word !

FIFTH GHOST.

This Book's His Word, and He Himself's the Word !
This Book is the white horses of Salvation,
The chariot this, and this the Conqueror !
Go forth thou Lion-Lamb, far forward bending !
Strike through dark lands with Thy all-piercing eyes !
See, see the shadows break—tumultuous stir,
Masses, abysses ! But among them stand,
Pillars of steadfastness, majestic shapes,
Grisly, the Principalities and Powers
Of outer night, wearing upon their brows
Defiance, and the swarthy bloom of Hell.
Go in among them, Thou, go down upon them,
Queller of all dark things, great Head of Flame !
Them with Thy lightnings and compelling thunders
Smite, bow them backward, sweep them to their place !
Burn with Thy wheels ! Trample the darkness down
To melting light, and make it Thy clear kingdom !

SIXTH GHOST.

Worthy is the Lion-Lamb !
Glory to the great I AM !

SEVENTH GHOST.

Sin-spotted youth, world-wearied ; difficult age,
Cramped down with stiff-bowed torments ; homeless
outcasts,
Lying in destitute benumbed caves ;
And wanderers reasonless, fantastical,
Gibbering abroad, what time the Moon is hunting
In thin white silence in the shadowy woods ;
And stricken creatures in the lazar-house,
Who know no kin, in whom care more than pain

Drinks up the eyes and blood in the night watches,
Or the half draught of suicidal poison
(Remorse and shuddering nature spilt the rest)
Holds its pale quarrel at the heart's red gates;
And they whose hearts are locked up by Despair,
And the key flung into the pit of Hell,—
Even these, all wasted and imperfect natures,
Shall be renewed and finished, and shall walk
Like angels in the white Millennial day,
Day of dead war and of consummate peace :
And that up-going pillared cry of sadness
Shall rise an equal power of praise and gladness.

FIRST GHOST.

This little Book the instrument shall be,
Filled with the Spirit ; kiss it reverently !

SECOND GHOST.

And this virgin bless again,
Free from sin and free from pain !

THIRD GHOST.

Her no fabled cestus, wrought
In the magic looms of thought,
Of Gorgon hairs, and coldest gleams
From Dian o'er the morning streams,
And plumes which staid Minerva gave
At midnight from her bird so grave,
Tissued in mystic warp with rays
Plucked from Apollo's head ablaze,
And stings of Wit, whose arrow-tips
In poignant wrath he keenly dips—

A woven dream—encircles round.
A better girdle she has found
In her filial piety,
And that good Book for ever nigh,
In angels, and the Comforter
Whom her dear Lord has sent to her.
Be she where the tempests blow
O'er the North the hail and snow,
Be she where in Southern lands
Hot winds lift the winnowed sands,
Peace with her shall still abide,
The peace that comes from Jesus' side.

FOURTH GHOST.

Child of duty, child of honour,
Thus we breathe our wish upon her :
Bless her to Death's earnest gates,
Leading to the separate states ;
Bless her to the Judgment-seat,
Bless her to the Heavens complete !

FIFTH GHOST.

But ha ! I smell the breath of day ;
Come away, come away.

And they vanish to the Blest
In the Land of Waiting Rest.

Night the Third.

What though no eager yearnings ever pass
With curdled tremblings through the Sea of Glass
Serene, where dwell the spirits of the just ;
Yet oft their wishful ghosts revisit here their dust.
Blood-spotted shadows ; scarce from darkness won,
The untimely babe that never saw the sun,
Buried at midnight, yearning with dumb strife
For the enlarged capacities of life ;
The suicide with stake-impalèd breast,
That in his damnèd crossway cannot rest ;
And things of guilt unknown, a thousand ghosts,
A thousand wandering creatures from the coasts
Of outer night, beyond the reach of grace,
With restless flittings fill this burial-place.
Ye sons of living men, first lay aside
Full bread and purple clothing, lust and pride ;
And let the clear sense, that ye too must die,
Pierce the fat ear, and purge the filmy eye ;
Then hither come, and see these Shapes, and hear,
Sifted from out the dust, their voice of truth severe :—

FIRST GHOST (rising from a grave).

Mercy ! ah ! give me mercy ! Give me back
My hours of living days—give me but one !
One crystal minute, then ! Oh how I'd fill it
With penitential groans, grappling with God,
Bowed by His covenants to hear and pardon !
'Tis past ! And the sore pressure lies on me
Of alienation and expected Judgment.
Plaguing my spiritual vision, dooming me

Still more, the image of One crucified,
Ever before me, hanging in the gloom,
So looks at me, piercing me through and through
With His undying patience—O that look !
Come down, thou Meek-face ; 'twas not I that did it !
You cannot say 'twas I ! Go to the doers
Of the dread literal act ; and let them cry
(As cry they must, when the last heat comes on)
For one drop of the water and the blood
From Thy side-wound, to lie one little moment
Upon their fire-curled, cinder-crusted tongues.—
But ha ! from out the Judgment-waiting land,
Here comes a Child of Wrath beyond myself.
Hither, thou guiltier Ghost ! Knowest thou me ?
Thou lord and master of my youthful crimes,
Behold thy scholar ! What ! thou shivering thing,
Do thy pale skirts of spongy porous mist
Drink up the glimmerings of the lights of night,
Even like mine own ? I should have thought thee kneaded
Of leprous crusts of sin, and blistered marle
Baked with the blood of souls, and scurfy dross
From the purged furnaces of Hell, made clear
To the last spirituality of heat
For master sinners. Look upon me, fiend,
Look on thy handiwork, fashioned by thee
Into a thing for Tophet ! Was it good
To make me this ? My curse go down with thee
Beyond the soundings of extravagant thought !

SECOND GHOST (*advancing*).

The old apology for native vice !
Weak thing ! as if thy blindly breathing soul
Within thy mother's womb was not engrained

With all thy colours of eternal years !
Our place is wide enough, let's shun each other.
[*The Second Ghost glimmers away.*]

FIRST GHOST.

He thinks to flee : vain thought ! Down he must go !
I too must down ! Pitfall, nor den forlorn,
Nor the lone crags of the high-hornèd mountains
Where eagles yelp, jungles, nor sandy lands
Of idle desolation, nor all places
Where the last modesties of nature dwell,
Can hide me from the Power that lets me forth
A little space, to aggravate my doom
By the contrasted sweetness of the earth,
Then draws me back again.—Here are the graves
Of our old house. Would I could gather up
My dust, and take it hence ! How shall I bear
The looks of virtuous kindred on that Day,
When summoned I must rise and stand with them,
Even face to face, with all my guilt revealed ?
But ha ! a new-made grave ? Is it my sister's ?
Ah ! yes, the length and place of it are hers.
My father's and my mother's, long ago
Sunk to the natural level of the earth,
Are hard, and green, and undistinguishable.
But where the spirits of the three ? In Bliss,
Let me believe ; for I've not known them in
My land of heavy patience. I'm alone
Of all my father's house shut out from Bliss.
Can they be happy when I'm thus shut out ?
Oh for the Patriarch's Ladder to come down,
Resting its glory on my mother's dust,
That I might climb the battlements of light,
And be with them for ever !

Help me, my mother, plead for me with Christ !
 Stretch down thy dear, dear arms, and take me up ;
 For I was fashioned in thy holy body ;
 My father, and my sister, plead for me,
 Hang on His wounded side, and plead for me !

The Phantom of his Mother passes by.

Salvation ! 'Tis my mother ! But she's gone !
 Would she but come again, I'd burst my bounds,
 And follow her unto the shining doors,
 And catch her hand, and she would draw me in !
 But ah ! she did not speak to me, nor look
 Back with regret : 'Twas not my mother, then ;
 But some false head which the Avenging Power
 Built up of crystal air and sunny light,
 To mock and plague me.

[*The Phantom again passes by.*

She again ? 'Tis she !

I'll follow—oh ! oh ! oh ! Perdition has me !
 'Tis but the grinning Fiend ! See, how he leers
 Back through the blasted night ! I know thee, Demon,
 Practical Liar in impersonations,
 As in thy cozening terms and instigations ;
 Meanest of all created things ! But power
 Is given him o'er me, and I must go down.

[*The First Ghost vanishes.*

The Second Ghost reappears.

SECOND GHOST.

There's no escape ! Souls, not yet clothed upon
 With semblance, stretching toward the light of life
 On the vague shores of Possibility,

Sorrow shall bring you to the birth of blood,
If come you must! Would I had ne'er been born!

[The Second Ghost vanishes.]

A strange but short-lived Tempest fills the Churchyard.

THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH GHOSTS.

THIRD GHOST.

What Evil Thing so beats about the night,
With dragon wings of tumult and affright?

FOURTH GHOST.

By yon trail of sulphurous blue,
Demons here have had to do.
In the livid issue, lo!
Pale and dreadful faces go.

FIFTH GHOST.

Wo to the outcasts! Them, nor cunning strings
Melodious, nor soft-stopping pipes, nor all
The sylvan company of sweet-throated birds,
No, nor the very music of the spheres,
Could tune to peace!

A Seventh Ghost comes shuddering near.

SEVENTH GHOST.

I am that outcast thing!
Ye Powers of Mercy, will ye not yet take
Penance from me on earth? Cut ye it out
From the vast quarries of prodigious sorrow,
Shaping it to my soul, and I will do it.
Be it but on the earth, I care not how
Or where I do it; whether groping through
The barren darkness of the Polar hills,
Or glaring shadowless where the inflamed

Dog of the Firmament, fire-fanged, breathing fire,
Bays down with his unmitigated jaws
The panting nations : I will do it there !
Far have I wandered, beating round the bars
Of night, to burst into the boundless day,
Unnoticed ; ah ! it cannot be, the Power
Of Punishment's too strong and subtle for me,
Curbing me back with his invisible hand.
Wo ! wo ! my hour is come, and I must down !
 [The Seventh Ghost melts away down into a grave.]

FIFTH GHOST.

Look ! look ! oh look ! They're gone ! Saw ye them not ?
Round yon flat table of memorial stone
They seemed to sit, a ghostly company
Of hopeless Ones (judging from their sad faces,
Solemnly sad), there with symbolic handling
Of shadowy elements, trying to renew
The Supper of the Lord, as if they might
Call back the day of mercy and of grace,
And still be Christ's. But full upon them came
A blast from the Evil One, to whom was given
Power o'er their lawless and uncertain rite,
A levelled blast, and whirled them clean away,
Like dry dead leaves, sweeping the naked table
Bare of commemoration. O ye sons
Of living men, lay hold of the blue day
Which yet is yours, hold fast the fleeting night
With struggling prayers—hold them, nor let them go
Till you have made your peace with the Almighty !

SIXTH GHOST.

Yon solitary Shade, see how he stands
Aloof—I knew him in the days of earth—

Aloof, alone, and introverted all !
Back, and far back in Memory's inner rooms,
Hung round with haunted glooms, Life's Tragic Sorrows
Act themselves o'er anew, under the eye
Of dread, sole-sitting Conscience.—O that groan !
See how he starts, breaking off all at once
The unfinished trilogies of evolving Guilt,
Shuddering away, self-chased, down into night !

THIRD GHOST.

Let us be humbly thankful, we are safe ;
Rejoicing humbly, as the little bird
Flies low and coweringly, and with a half
Chirrup of gladness from the fowler's hand.

FOURTH GHOST.

Praise to our Elder Brother ! But for Him,
No earth had been to us, no life, no Heaven !

FIFTH GHOST.

But for His covenanted blood, the Curse
Had killed man's blighted world. The orbs of ether
Spin on the axis of His love. The Bow,
Fashioned of air, and light, and the tears of rain,
Is but the glad reflection of His face,
Graciously pleased. The linnet in the leaves
Christ-chartered sits, while warblings well and bubble
Out from its white-ruffed throat ; the dappled fawn
Leaps through the sunny glades, and through the thickets
Bursts, richly powdered with the coloured dust
Of sylvan pith exuberant, and smelling
Of honey-dews, balsams, and dropping gums.
Sleep comes from Him, and peace ; the husbandman
Bearing his harvest sheaves, and the blithe shepherd

Piping upon his unmolested hill ;
Honey, and wine, and oil ; marriage and children ;
And all the milky veins of love that run
Branching through nature—all that's fair and good.

SIXTH GHOST.

And for the sake of Jesus, God's own Heavens
Are softly set upon a thousand hinges
Of mercy, ever flexible, ever bowing
Flexible downward to the contrite ones.

THIRD GHOST.

Afflictions come from Him. The awful Finer
Sits by His furnace pot. The heart of man
Is in the pot—the foul, the stony heart.
Lurid from far, but ever coming nearer,
Fiercer and redder, with its threatened flame,
The heat of Hell burns on the furnace pot.
But all-pervading Love goes quicklier through it,
Melting it down dissolved : The dross is purged
Away, below ; and in the liquid metal,
Perfect and pure through suffering, the Finer,
Looking therein, sees His own image clear
Reflected : And the holy workmanship
Of every feature, by His art divine,
He fixes there, never to be effaced.

FIFTH GHOST.

Forth stalks the King of Terrors, on his head
The fretted crown of pain ; his bony hands
Grasping his sheer cold scythe, down through the field
Of Time he goes, a mower lean and strong,
Mowing his swaths of life. But see, the Babe

Of Bethlehem strikes the crown from off his head,
And breaks his scythe, and casts him into Hell.

SIXTH GHOST.

O for the Spirit's day, when Sin and Death
No more shall hurt the people of the Lord !

THIRD GHOST.

Hasten Thy day of power, refining Spirit,
Making earth's dwellers like the Saints whose feet
Walk on the terrible crystal.

FOURTH GHOST.

Judgment then
Comes unto the sons of men.

FIFTH GHOST.

It should be noon ; but where's the sun ?
The air is stagnant, silent, dun.
Is it eclipse ? Is earthquake near ?
Nature listens dumb and drear.
 That Trump of Doom !
 It rends the gloom.
The eagle falls a ruffled heap,
His pinions drowned in endless sleep :
The affrighted horse, half rearing, sinks ;
The dull ox, as he stoops and drinks :
The lion in the wilderness
Has crooked his knees to that stern stress.
The quick are changed : the dead arise.
Lo ! the Judge is in the skies.
Rejoice, ye Saints ! The Saints rejoice
To hear His bliss-awarding voice :

He blesses them, and they are blest
To go into his Heavenly rest.
Wrath for the Wicked ! Doomed and driven,
They sink beneath the Eye of Heaven :
Like hurrying draught of bitter cup,
The Eternal Gulf has drunk them up.

SIXTH GHOST.

Happy, happy we who dwell
In His love unspeakable,
Fearing not that coming Day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away ;
For, from the days of everlasting years,
Ere we were fashioned in the Vale of Tears,
The Lamb—the Judge himself—was pledged to be our
stay !

THIRD GHOST.

Widening up the eastern skies,
See the pale rim of day arise,
Another day to mortal men,
Toil, and fear, and care again !
Spirit ('tis Thy sacred trust),
Help them, help them, they are dust ;
Make them wise, and make them just !
And in great consummation, Dove,
Bring them to our morn above,
Morn of the perpetual day !—
Sister shadows, come away.

[The Ghosts vanish.]

THE OLD SOLDIER.

CAMPAIGN THE FIRST.

"GLORY of War! But there—behold the end!"
 The Old Soldier said: 'twas by his evening fire,
 Winter the time: so saying, out he jerked
 His wooden leg before him. With a look
 Half comic, half pathetic, his gray head
 Turned down askance, the pigtail out behind
 Stiff with attention, saying nothing more,
 He sat and eyed the horizontal peg.
 Back home the stump he drew not, till with force
 Disdainful deep into the slumbering fire
 He struck the feruled toe, and poking roused
 A cheery blaze, to light him at his work.
 The unfinished skep is now upon his knee,
 For June top-swarmer in his garden trim:
 With twists of straw, and willow wattling thongs,
 Crooning he wrought. The ruddy flickering fire
 Played on his eyebrow shag, and thin fresh cheek,
 Touching his varying eye with many a gleam.
 His cot behind, soldierly clean and neat,
 Gave back the light from many a burnished point.
 His simple supper o'er, he reads The Book;
 Then loads and mounts his pipe, puffing it slow,
 Musing on days of yore, and battles old,

And many a friend and comrade dead and gone,
And vital ones, boughs of himself, cut off
From his dispeopled side, naked and bare.
Puffs short and hurried, puff on puff, betray
His swelling heart : up starts the Man, to keep
The Woman down : forth from his cot he views
Yon moon high going through the clouds of night,
Soft as the soul makes way through yielding dreams :
And Wonder listens in yon starry lofts.
No voice for him ! True to the veins of blood,
His eyes still soften ; turning in, he locks
His lonely door, and stumps away to bed.

CAMPAIGN THE SECOND.

How fresh the morning meadow of the Spring,
Pearl-seeded with the dew : adown its path,
Bored by the worms of night, the Old Soldier takes
His wonted walk, and drinks into his heart
The gush and gurgle of the cold green stream.
The huddled splendour of the April noon ;
Glancings of rain ; the mountain-tops all quick
With shadowy touches and with greening gleams ;
Blue bent the Bow of God ; the coloured clouds,
Soaked with the glory of the setting sun,—
These all are his for pleasure : his the Moon,
Chaste huntress, dipping, o'er the dewy hills,
Her silver buskin in the dying day.

The Summer morn is up : the tapering trees
Are all a-glitter. In his garden forth
The Old Soldado saunters : hovering on
Before him, oft upon the naked walk
Rests the red butterfly ; now full dispread ;

Now, in the wanton gladsomeness of life,
Half on their hinges folding up its wings ;
Again full spread and still : o'erhead away,
Lo ! now it wavers through the liquid blue.
But he intent from out their straw-roofed hives
Watches his little foragers go forth,
Boot on the buds to make, to suck the depths
Of honey-throated blooms, and home return,
Their thighs half smothered with the yellow dust.
Dibble and hoe he plies ; anon he props
His heavy-headed plants, and visits round
His herbs of grace : the simple flowerets here
Open their infant buttons ; there the flowers
Of preference blow, the lily and the rose .

Fast by his cottage door there grows an oak,
Of state supreme, drawn from the centuries.
Pride of the old man's heart, in many a walk
Far off he sees its top of sovereignty,
And with instinctive loyalty his cap
Soldierly touches to the Royal Tree—
King of all trees that flourish ! King revered !
Trafalgars lie beneath his rugged vest,
And in his acorns is the Golden Age !
Summer the time ; thoughtful beneath his tree
The Veteran puffs his intermittent pipe,
And cheats the sweltering hours ; yet noting oft
The flight of bird, and exhalation far
Quivering and drifting o'er the fallow field,
And the great cloud rising upon the noon,
The sultry smithy of the thunder-forge.
Anon the weekly journal of events
Conning, he learns the doings of the world,
And what it suffers—justice-loosened wrath
Falling from Heaven upon unrighteous states ;

Lean Sorrow tracking still the bread-blown Sin ;
A spirit of lies ; high-handed wrong ; the curse
Of ignorance crass and fat stupidity ;
And maddened nations at their contre-dance
Of Revolutions, when each bloody hour
Comes staggering in beneath its load of crimes,
Enough to bend the back of centuries.

The sun goes down the western afternoon,
Lacing the clouds with his diverging rays :
Homeward the children from the village school
Come whooping on ; but aye their voices fall,
As aye they turn unto the old man's door—
So much they love him. He their progress notes
In learning, and has prizes for their zeal,
Flowers for the girls, and fruit,—hooks for the boys,
Whistles, and cherry-stones ; and, to maintain
The thews and sinews of our coming men,
He makes them run and leap upon the green.

The nodding wain has borne the harvest home,
And yellowing apples spot the orchard trees :
Now may you oft the Old Soldado see
Stumping, relieved against the evening sky,
Along the ferny height—so much he loves
Its keen and wholesome air ; nor less he loves
To hear the rustling of the fallen leaves,
Swept by the wind along the glittering road,
As home he goes beneath the Autumnal moon.

Thus round the starry girdle of the year
His spirit circles thankfully. Not grieved
When Winter comes once more, his hale red cheek
Goes kindling through the cold, forth when the morn
Tinkles with ice, and when on day's far edge,
Down in the windy trouble of the west,
Night's ghostly masons build the toppling clouds.

Zest to his cottage thus : with chosen books
He sits with Wisdom by his evening fire ;
Puff goes his cheerful pipe ; by turns he works ;
And ever from his door, before he sleeps,
He eyes the sister planets, luminous large,
Silent, soft spinning on their mystic wheels
The thread of time : how beautiful they be !

CAMPAIGN THE THIRD.

Lo ! yonder sea-mew seeks the inland moss :
Beautiful bird ! how snowy clean it shows
Behind the ploughman, on a glinting day,
Trooping with rooks, and farther still relieved
Against the dark-brown mould, alighting half,
Half hovering still ; yet far more beautiful
Its glistening sleekness, when from out the deep
Sudden and shy emerging on your lee,
What time thro' breeze, and spray, and freshening brine,
Your snoring ship, beneath her cloud of sail,
Bends on her buried side, carried it rides
The green curled billow and the seething froth,
Turning its startled head this way and that,
Half looking at you with its wild blue eye,
Then moves its fluttering wings and dives anew !

Smoking his pipe of peace, wearing away
The summer eve, the Old Soldado sits
Beneath his buzzing oak, and eyes the bird,
With many a thought of the suggested sea.
The veering gull came circling back and near :
"What ! nearer still?" the Veteran said, and rose,
And doffed his bonnet, and held down his pipe :
"Give me her message, then ! Oh, be to me

Her spirit not unconscious from the deep
Of how I mourn her loss ! Bird, ah ! you're gone.
Vain dreamer I ! For every night my soul
Knocks at the gates of the invisible world ;
But no one answers me, no little hand
Comes out to grasp at mine. Well, all is good :
Even, bird, thy heart-deceiving change of flight,
To teach me patience, was ordained of old."

Yes, all is ordered well : Aimless may seem
The wandering foot ; even it commissioned treads
The very lines by Providence laid down,
Sure, though unseen, of all-converging good :
Look up, old man, and see :—

Along the road
Came one in sailor's garb : his shallow hat
Of glazed and polished leather shone like tin.
A fair young damsel led him by the hand—
For he was blind : and to the summer sun,
Fearless and free, he held his bronzed face.
An armless sleeve, pinned to his manly breast,
Told he had been among the "Hearts of Oak."
The damsel saw the old man of the tree,
His queue of character, and wooden leg,
And smiling whispered to the tar she led.
Near turned, both stood. Down from her shoulder then
The maid unslung a mandolin, and played,
High singing as she played, a battle-piece
Of bursts and pauses : keeping time the while,
Now furious fast, now dying slow away,
His pigtail wagging with emotion deep,
The Old Soldier puffed his sympathetic pipe.
The minstrel ceased ; he drew his leathern purse,
With pension lined, and offered guerdon due.
"Nay," said the maiden, smiling, "for your tye

Alone I played, and for your wooden leg ;
Yea, but for these, the symbols of the things
You've done and suffered—like my father here."

"Well, then, you'll taste my honey and my bread?"

The Soldier said, and from his cot he brought
Seats for the strangers; him the damsel helped,
Bearing the bread and honey; and they ate,
The damsel serving, and she ate in turn.
When various talk had closed the simple feast,
The strangers rose to go: "My head! my head!"
The sailor cried, and fell in sudden pangs.
They bore and laid him on the Soldier's bed.
Forth ran the lass, and from the neighbouring town
Brought the physician; but all help was vain,
For God had touched him, and the man must die.
His mind was clear: "Give me that cross, my child,
That I may kiss it ere my spirit part,"
He said. And from her breast the damsel drew
A little cross, peculiar shaped and wrought,
And gave it him. It caught the Soldier's eye;
And when the girl received it back, he took
And looked at it.

"This cross, O dying man,
Was round my daughter's neck, when in the deep
She perished from me, on that fatal night
The 'Sphinx' was burnt, forth sailing from the Clyde.
Her dying mother round the infant's neck
This holy symbol, with her blessing, hung.
Friendless at home, I took my only child,
Bound to the Western World, where we had friends.
Scarce out of port, up flamed our ship on fire,
With crowding terrors through the umbered night.
Oh what a shout of joy, when through the gloom
Which walled us round within our glaring vault,

Spectral and large, we saw the ship of help !
Our boats were lowered ; the first, o'ercrowded, swamped ;
Down to the second, as it lurched away,
I flung my child : the monstrous waves went by
With backs like blood : the sudden-shifting boat
Is off with one, another has my babe.
I sprung to save her—all the rest is drear
Grisly confusion, till I found me laid,
In some far island, in a fisher's hut.
Me, as they homeward scudded past the fire,
Those lonely farmers of the deep picked up,
Floating away, and rubbed to vital heat ;
And through the fever-gulf which had me next,
With simple love they brought my weary life.
The shores and islands round, for lingering news
Of people saved from off that burning wreck,
Oh how I haunted then ; but of my child
No man had heard. Hopeless, and naked poor,
I rushed to war : from zone to zone, across
The rifts of ice, beneath the strokes of heat,
Reckless I fought. This cot received me next ;
And here, I trust, my mortal chapter ends.
But say, oh say, how came you by this cross ?"

The dying man had risen upon his arm,
Ere ceased the Soldier's tale : " She is thy child,
Take her," he said ; " and may she be to thee,
As she to me has been, a daughter true,
A child of good, a blessing from on high !"
So saying, back he fell. Around his neck
Her arms of love the sobbing damsel threw,
And kissed him many a time. And then she rose,
And flung herself upon the Soldier's breast—
For he's her father too. And many tears,
Silent, the old man rained upon her neck.

“O wondrous hour !” the dying tar went on,
“Who could have thought of this ! I am content.
The Lord be praised that she has found a friend,
Since I must go from her ! That night of fire,
Our brig of war bore down upon your ship,
And sent her boats to save you from the flame.
Near you we could not come ; so forth I swam,
And to your crowded stern I fixed a rope,
To take the people off. Back as I slid
Along the line to show them how to come,
A child, upheaved upon the billow top,
Was borne against my breast ; I snatched her up ;
Fast to my neck she clung ; none could I find
To claim and take her : she was thus mine own.
That night she wore the cross which now she wears.
Why need I tell the changes of my life ?
In war I lost an arm, and then an eye ;
My other eye went out from sympathy,
And home I came a blind and helpless man.
But I had still one comforter, my child—
My young breadwinner, too ! From wake to wake
She led me on, playing her mandolin,
Which I had brought her from the south of Spain.
She’ll tell you all the rest when I am gone.
Bury me now in your own burial-place,
That still our daughter may be near my dust.
And Jesus keep you both !” He said, and died.

They buried him in their own burial-place.
And many a flower, heart-planted by that maid,
And good Old Soldier, bloomed upon his grave.
And many a requiem, when the gloaming came,
The damsel played above his honoured dust.
Not less, but all the more, her heart was knit
Unto her own true father. He, the while,

How proud was he to give her up his keys,
Mistress installed of all his little stores ;
And introduce her to his flowers, and bees,
Making the sea-green honey—all for her ;
And sit beside her underneath the oak,
Listening the story of her bygone life.
In turn she made him of her mother tell,
And aye a tear dropped on her needlework ;
And all his wars the old campaigner told.
And God was with them, and in peace and love
They dwelt together in their happy home.

THE SHEPHERD'S DOG.

LOVED and loving, God her trust,
 The Shepherd's Wife goes dust to dust.
 Their Dog, his eye, half sad, half prompt to save,
 Follows the coffin down into the grave.
 Behind his man he takes his drooping stand.
 The clods jar hollow on the coffin-lid :
 Startled he lifts his head ;
 To that quick shudder of the master's pain,
 He thrusts his muzzle deep into his hand,
 Solicitous deeper yet again.
 No kind old pressure answers. Shrinking back,
 Apart, perplexed with broken ties,
 Yet loyal grave-ward, down he lies,
 His muzzle flat along the snowy track.
 The mourners part : The widowed Shepherd goes
 Homeward, yet homeless, through the mountain-snows.
 Him follows slowly, silently,
 That Dog : what a strange trouble in his eye,—
 Something beyond relief !
 Is it the creature yearning in dumb stress
 To burst obstruction up to consciousness
 And fellowship in Reason's grief ?

G E N I U S.

I.

EYE of the brain and heart,
O Genius, inner sight,
Wonders from the familiar start
In thy decisive light.
Wide and deep the eye must go,
The process of our world to know.
Old mountains grated to the sea
Sow the young seed of isles to be.
States dissolve, that Nature's plan
May bear the broadening type of Man.
Passes ne'er the Past away:
Child of the ages, springs To-day.
Life, death, and life ! but circling change
Still working to a higher range !
Make thee all Science, Genius, clear
Our world ; all Muses, grace and cheer.
And shaping still the ideal, be
The joy a special joy to thee.
For thee the starry belts of time,
The inner laws, the heavenly chime :
Thine storm and rack—the forests crack,
The sea gives up her secrets hoary ;
And Beauty thine, on loom divine
Weaving the rainbow's woof of glory.

II.

Power of the civic heart,
More than a power to know,
Genius, incarnated in Art,
By thee the nations grow.
Lawgiver, thine, and priest, and sage
Lit up the Oriental Age.
Persuasive groves, and musical
Of love the illumined mountains all,
Eagles, and rods, and axes clear,
Forum and amphitheatre,
These in thy plastic forming hand,
Forth leapt to life the Classic Land.
Old and New, the Worlds of Light,
Who bridged the gulf of Middle Night?
See the purple passage rise,
Many-arched of centuries;
Genius built it long and vast,
And o'er it Social Knowledge passed.
Far in the glad transmitted flame,
Shinar knit to Britain came.
Their State by thee our fathers free,
O Genius, founded deep and wide;
Majestic towers the fabric ours,
And awes the world from side to side.

III.

Mart of the ties of blood,
Mart of the souls of men!
O Christ, to see Thy Brotherhood
Bought to be sold again!

Front of Hell, to trade therein !
Genius, face the giant sin :
Shafts of thought, truth-headed clear,
Tempered all in Pity's tear,
Every point, and every tip,
In the blood of Jesus dip ;
Pierce till the Monster reel and cry,
Pierce him till he fall and die.
Yet cease not, rest not, onward quell,
Power divine and terrible !
See where yon bastioned Midnight stands
On half the sunken central lands ;
Shoot ! let thy arrow-heads of flame
Sing as they pierce the blot of shame,
Till all the dark economies
Become the light of blessed skies.
For this above, in wondering love,
To Genius shall it first be given
To trace the lines of past designs,
All confluent to the finished Heaven.

THE DEMONIAK.

CHAPTER I.

MIRIAM'S INTERVIEW WITH CHRIST.

In the green month of Zif beneath an agèd palm-tree sate,
In the wide plain of Jericho, a mother desolate :
Her lips were covered with her robe, upon her head she
cast

The dust of earth ; and over her the hours unheeded
passed.

Forth from the neighbouring trees came Christ, and stood
at Miriam's feet ;

His face with peace and ardour blent, unutterably sweet.

She raised her head, she saw Him stand, kneeling she
clasped His knee :

" Help me, great Man of Nazareth ! give back my son to
me !

Take pity on a mother's loins, broken with weary pain !
Over the cloudy hills I go—I seek him still in vain !
Sorrow my only portion is ; sleep flees from me ; for food,
Thy handmaid oft is fain to pick harsh berries from the
wood.

"My heart breaks : Tell me, where is he?"—"Daughter
of Judah, how
Should I thy son know?"—"I have seen Thy might—a
prophet Thou!
And I have heard Thee speak great things, like arrows
dipped in gall,
Shot from a bow, against the proud; have seen before
them fall
The brows of haughty men : but aye, like honey-drops,
distil
Thy words, the spirits of the grieved with healing balm
to fill.

"Where is my son, my Herman? At first I stayed at
home,
Till it was cruel so to rest, while he was forced to
roam.
At morn I looked for him, from noon on to the twilight
dim;
And when in the uncertain light the evening shadows
swim,
I shaped him thence. He came not—God from love has
cast him forth;
But he is dear to me, and I will hunt him o'er the
earth.

"Hear me, good Lord! Oh bless me then! A widow,
sore bereft,
I lost my daughter Judith. But Herman still was
left.
With power, like an anointed child's, with glory his brow
was clad,
His cheek with virgin health; how bloomed the beauty
of his head!

His young eye was as when the sun shines in an eagle's
eye ;
A life within a life was there, burnished, and bold, and
shy.

“ And scarce the silky blossom of his yellow beard was
seen,
When he the ancient forests traced with slings and arrows
keen ;
Heroic daring from each limb breathed ; as the posting
winds
Fleet, o'er the hills so high and bright he chased the
dappled hinds.
Then with the men of Naphtali, a lion-hunter bold,
He tossed his golden head afar on their snowy mountains
cold.

“ His boyhood with just joys enlarged, no guilt had spoilt,
no fear ;
Nor painted women lured his youth—hence was his spirit
clear.
And I had taught him the great acts of old embattled
kings,
Champions, and sainted sages, priests, judges, all mighty
things ;
Till, from deep thought, his eye was like a prophet's
burdened eye :
And he was now a man indeed, built for a purpose
high.

“ God of my fathers ! if my hopes in him presumptuous
were,
From him to me the punishment, tempered with love,
transfer !

Help us, thou Man of God ! Perhaps by hopeless passions
bound
And rendered weak, the mastery a Demon o'er him
found :
Reason and duty all, all life, his being all became
Subservience to the wild strange law that overbears his
frame.

“ Dark as the blue piled thunderlofts then grew his fore-
head high,
And gleamed like their veined lightnings, rash and pas-
sionate, his eye ;
For he was sorely vexed and fierce. Anon, in gentle fits,
Like idle hermit looking at the clouds, all day he sits.
At length he fled far from my care, he felt his life
disgraced :
Pride took him to the wilderness, shame keeps him in
the waste.

“ Strong as the eagle's wings of quest, on aimless errands
runs
The beauteous savage of my love ; but still his mother
shuns.
Along the dizzy hills that reel up in the cloudy rack,
O'er tumbling chasms, by desert wells, he speeds his
boundless track ;
And in the dead hours of the night, when happier
children lie
In slumber sealed, he journeys far the flowing rivers by.

“ And oft he haunts the sepulchres, where the thin shoals
of ghosts
Flit shivering from death's chilling dews ; to their un-
bodied hosts,

That churm through night their feeble plaint, he yells ;
at the red morn
Meets the great armies of the winds, high o'er the moun-
tains borne,
Leaping against their viewless rage, tossing his arms on
high,
And hanging balanced o'er sheer steeps against the
morning sky.

" His food from honey of the rocks and old cleft trees is
drawn,
From wild-fowl caught in weedy pools by the raw light
of dawn,
From berries, all spontaneous fruits. In winter, in the
caves
Of hills he sleeps; the summer tree above his slumber
waves ;
Nature's wild commoner, my child ! on the bleak autumn
eves,
When small birds shriek adown the wind, he lies among
the leaves.

" By day the sun, the frost by night, weariness, want,
and pain,
Sorely his young eyes must have spoilt, and dried his
wasted brain.
Gone are his youth's fine hopes; and mine, what are
they? My poor child,
Sweet Patience for thy minister go with thee to the
wild !
What shalt thou do when sickness comes? How much
it grieveth me,
That from thy mother's love thou shouldst, as from an
enemy, flee !

“ For him these chastened bones of mine have stood the
winter's shock ;
I've crept to reach him as he sate on the bald top of the
rock ;
When summer has enlarged the year upon the pleasant
mountains,
I've seen him sit long hours afar beside their spangled
fountains ;
But the coy lightning of his eye ne'er sleeps : my art is
vain ;
Swift as a roebuck he is gone, and I must weep again.

“ Charmers, exorcists of old skill, wizards that muttering
go,
All that deal subtly, I have tried : I add but sin to wo.
The Expiation-feast I've kept ; I've prayed by many a
tomb
Of prophets, fervid men of old, that God would change
his doom :
All's vain ! No, no, it shall not be ; for I will track the
earth,
O'ertake him, hold him with strong love, and drive the
Demon forth ! ”

A cry rung in the distant woods : up Miriam rose and ran
But turned, came back, and kneeling kissed the garment
of that Man—
For anxious hope is dutiful. With beating heart again
She turned away, ere Jesus spake, and sought the
woody plain ;
And through the rustling alleys, through the mild glades,
one by one,
She wandered half the summer day, but could not see
her son.

CHAPTER II.

MIRIAM'S INTERVIEW WITH HER SON, HERMAN
THE DEMONIAK.

By Jordan's waters, Miriam sate beneath a tree and wept.
She heard a groan : a man from out the shrubs before
her crept ;

And, like the Serpent damned of God—as if to crush the
worm

Of hunger that within him gnawed, and ground his
writhing form—

He trailed his belly in the dust ; his eye, that keenly
burned

With famine's purging fire, to her—his mother—was
upturned.

“Bread ! bread ! O bread !” feebly he cried. Her little
store she took,

And gave it to his trembling clutch ; and brought him
from the brook

Water in hollow leaves ; then down beside him sitting
she

Soft drew to her his yellow head, and laid it on her knee ;
With kiss long as an exile's kiss, she clung unto him
there ;

Bedewed his face with many tears, and wiped it with her
hair.

He slept, like an o'erwearied babe : she held her sobbing
breast

To stir him not ; and hid his eyes, that he might longer
rest ;

And smoothed his far-descending locks, dishonoured
with the dust ;

And long and calmly did he sleep beneath her sacred
trust.

At length he started with a groan; he knelt upon his
knee :—

“Thou mother! why hast thou not sought the Son of
God for me?

“Ha! this is harsh: Oh pardon me! I know thy love,
well tried,

Has me by the tall forests sought, and by the pastures
wide,

Rocks, and dim sepulchres: dear one! oh think me not
unkind;

The Fiend has kept me from you so, wild as the wintry
wind:

He takes me far, he brings me near; athwart your path
I fleet,

Driven, that each other we may see, but ne'er each other
meet.

“Blest are the dead! what though their face no more
beholds the sun,

Though filled with barren ashes be the breast of each
loved one,

With dusty motes confused and dull the jewel of the
eye;

Yet are they gone, and are at rest: how peacefully they
lie!

Oh to be with them! Spotted plague blue strike me, each
sore ill;

So were I not a vessel filled with an infernal will!

"I am thy quarry of the wild! my faithful huntress
thou!

And think'st thou not thy toils for me my spirit down
must bow?

The Fiend will come again, leave me ere I leave thee:
Away!

Spend not thy body, so shall I less truly be thy
prey."—

"Speak not to me, I will not go; think'st thou thy
youth's first prime

Was half so dear to me as thou, now old before thy
time?

"But come with me: fear not; 'tis past; we'll hear soft
waters flow;

The stock-dove in the twilight woods shall soothe us as
we go,

Which aye so well thou lovedst to hear; the stars that
softly burn

O'er the green pasture-hills, shall light our homeward
glad return;

And then the holy moon shall rise, and lead us all the
way;

And the very God of peace and love will guard our
home for aye!"

"Ha! this is vain: why art thou here? haste, haste,
there's but one hope;

The Man of Nazareth alone can with the Demon
cope:

Man? Nay, the Son of God; for oft have I, in midnight
hours,

Heard in Engaddi's howling caves whisperings of the
Dark Powers

Speak of Messiah, and declare this Jesus him to be.
And, from some great event at hand, this pause is given
to me."

"To-day, oh had I Him constrained ! With my own
thoughts oppressed,
Even I can see Him more than man : from house to house
distressed
He breathes His noiseless peace ; by shores of lakes, on
the dim hills,
He teaches men ; the lazar-house His gracious presence
stills ;
A new spirit whispers through the woods or Him to me
at eve ;
All nature seems with conscious hope of some great
change to heave."

"The Fiend ! the Fiend ! hark !" Herman cried : "He
left me here at noon,
Hungry and sick among the brakes ; and comes he then
so soon ?"
Up from the shores of the Dead Sea came a dull booming
sound ;
The leaves stirred on the trees ; thin winds went wailing
all around ;
Then laughter shook the sullen air. To reach his
mother's hand,
The young man grasped ; but back was thrown convulsed
upon the sand.

No time was there for Miriam's love ; he rose, a smothered
gleam
Was on his brow, with fierce motes rolled his eye's
distempered beam ;

He smiled—'twas as the lightning of a hope about to die
For ever from the furrowed brows of Hell's eternity;
Like sun-warmed snakes, rose on his head a storm of
golden hair,
Tangled; and thus on Miriam fell hot breathings of
despair :—

“Perish the breasts that gave me milk! yea, in thy
mouldering heart
Good thrifty roots I'll plant, to stay, next time, my
hunger's smart;
Red-veined derivèd apples I shall eat with savage haste,
And see thy life-blood blushing through, and glory in the
taste!”—

“Peace!” Miriam cried, “thou bitter Fiend! 'tis thou,
and not my son,
That speaks: I know thee, Demon cursed! I scorn thee,
thou dark One!

“Glory beyond thy power, dark One! him in the last of
days—
My son redeemed from thee—to Heaven my fathers' God
will raise;
Whilst thou—ha! outcast from that God!—forth shalt
be driven to dwell
With horned flames and Blasphemy, in the red range of
Hell:
There prey the old Cares, the Furies there whirl their
salt whips for aye,
And faces faded in the fire look upward with dismay.

“And sighs are there, and doleful cries, and tongues with
anguish dumb;
And through that glaring fierce abyss of years no hope
can come.

Fiend ! leave my child—God's child—avaunt ! down to thy chambers blue
Of sulphur go ! the palaces of Sodom yawn for you."

"Amen, Amen, Amen !" the Fiend with yelling laughter cried ;

And, like an arrow from the bow, her Herman left her side.

"Stay !" she exclaimed : "hear me, my son : I spake not thus to you !"

Swift o'er the desert shore he ran, she hasted to pursue ;

Crushing the salt surf samphire weeds, and many a crusted cake

Of salt, stumbling o'er pits, she went : she saw Gomorrah's lake,

She saw her son plunge in the waves ; but fast descending night,

Mingled with storms, fell on the deep, and hid him from her sight.

And she by the dark waters of great confusion stood,
Called on her son, prayed to her God to save him from the flood ;

She beat her breast, she cursed her tongue which to the Demon gave

Suggestion thus to drown her boy ; she met the lashing wave ;

And, bending forward, listened in each pause of the storm's sweep,

And thought she heard her Herman cry for help from out the deep.

And oh for him, for him, into the wasteful night she
gazed ;
And seemed to see his arms above the flashing waters
raised.
She felt at length that she was mocked ; along the barren
shore
Far did she wander, and sate down when she could go
no more.
The storm was now o'erblown, the moon rose o'er the
lullèd sea ;
She looked behind her — murky crags rose beetling
awfully.

Strange heads came stretching from the clefts of people
sheltered there,
Wild tenants of the rock, waked by the cries of her de-
spair,
Or by the tempest roused ; with threats they bade her
thence be gone,
Nor vex their drowsy caves of night with her untimely
moan.
“What creature of the shore art thou?” they cried.
“Thee hence betake !
A woman ? and hast dared to meet the storm-blast of the
Lake ?

“To hear the smothered voices rack the Sodomitish
sea,
Of spirits pent in the whelmed rooms ? Whence may
thy sorrows be ?
Seek'st thou the apples fair and false ?” Thence back
did Miriam run,
Less from her dread of violence, than haste to seek her
son.

She could not find him; homeward then she turned at
break of day,
And, with a sore bereavèd heart, went weeping all the
way.

CHAPTER III.

MIRIAM FOLLOWS HERMAN TO THE SEPULCHRES.

Deep in the hollow night, a voice to Miriam's slumber-
ing ear
Seemed thus to say, "Sleep'st thou, when I can sleep
not, mother dear?"
She started, listened, all was still :—" 'Tis but a dream's
wild freak;
These haggard fancies vex me so, since grief has made
me weak !
Yet, Demon-borne, in that dark storm, from out the
watery waste,
Unseen by me, he might have come." She rose with
trembling haste ;

Quickly attired, she looked abroad : the clouds away
were gone;
Blue ether, as if newly washed, with dewy gleams wide
shone;
The stars were very lustrous ; and in the abyss of night
The moon was set severely pure, a well of living light ;
Deep peace lay in the shadowy vales ; the solemn woods
were still ;
And nought was heard, save oft the bark of fox upon the
hill.

Again upon her bed she lay, sleep hovered o'er her
eyes;
Again unto her lattice came that voice, and called her
thrice.
"'Tis but the Tempter-fiend!" she said, and wept unto
her God;
Yet still from hope and changeless love again she looked
abroad;
She heard a cry—she knew that voice! with beating
heart she ran,
And followed through the glimmering trees the figure
of a man.

His form was hid:—"Heaven help," she prayed, "a
mother's weary side!
No farther can I go!" Again his shadow she espied;
Again forgot her weariness, and ran with all her speed!
To have him now, to have him now—it is her son indeed!
At length she came unto the place of the white sepulchres,
And paused—shall she pursue him there? For now
deep fear was hers:

For heavy clouds came o'er the moon; darkness fell all
around;
A shuddering wind grieved in the trees, skirting the
chapel ground;
Then clamoured birds obscene; and yells as from lean
hounds of blood,
Mixed with careering laughter, rose; choked shrieks as
from the flood,
And gallowing cries, like grappled fiends' clinched with
the last despair,
And hurried through Hell's fire-wrought gates, thickened
the midnight air.

And Miriam saw white wispy fires dance, warped with
vapours close,
Like exhalations kindled from the rotten churchyard
gross.
She feared the vexed Fiend, feared the ghosts of milky
babes to brave,
And fretted age that cannot rest within the wormy grave.
Yet there oft heard she Herman's voice: and morning
soon shall rise:
Beneath a tree she sate to watch, but sleep o'ertook her
eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

HERMAN'S SICKNESS.

'Twas now the time when, stepping down from her
ethereal bowers,
The touch of Spring's dew-sandalled foot kindles the
earth with flowers.
Fair rose the morn on Judah's hills: as Miriam waked,
a band
Of earnest men drew nigh: there Christ led Herman by
the hand.
"Woman, thy son's restored to thee," the blessed Jesus
said;
And with a shriek of joy she clasped, she kissed her Her-
man's head.

And he, too, wept, like one in whom pride is o'er-mastered
last.
Meanwhile, with modesty divine, Jesus away had passed.
Then Miriam took her Herman's hand, and led him to
her home.

Came quiet days : he lived like one by some strange blight
o'ercome.
His spirit pined, his days declined : beneath his mother's
eye
Of watchful love he bowed his head austere calm to
die.

CHAPTER V.

HERMAN'S BLESSING.

'Twas now the golden Autumn-tide : Herman lay on his
bed,
Through a small lattice on his face the yellow light was
shed :—
“Is it the matin hour, mother?”—for she was near at
hand.
“No, my dear boy ; the setting sun shines sweetly o'er
our land ;
With songs unto the fountains go the maids in a long
train ;
Why loiterest thou, dear idle one? Up, list to them again :
“Loved wert thou by them all, I see the illumined hills
of oak ;
Valleys, where bow the cumbered trees 'neath Autumn's
mellow yoke ;
The glittering streams ; and the wide heavens of glory
o'er our head ;
The barley-harvest days are come—I see the reapers
spread.
Be up, my boy ! be up, fair boy ! thy look is all too sad.
Nay, health is dawning on thy face : Up, make thy
mother glad.”

He raised his head with fearful haste, but drooping nature failed,

Feebly he groaned ; yet, yet with might his filial heart prevailed,

Again he rose, he took her hand :—" Eternal God above,
Keep this tried mother when I die, and recompense her love !

Her very love has almost been my evil minister,
So solemn has it made my life, so full of cares for her.

" Keen as the wild wolf's following o'er the glazed wintry waste,

Biting the blast, whetting his fangs, upon the prey to haste,

She hunted my distempered life—her heart could ne'er stand still !—

Even where the sun unseals the snows, high on the perilous hill.

Of whom but thee ? of none but thee, thou mother, dearest, best,

Speak I ! Beneath thy weight of love my spirit lies oppressed.

" I die from thee, I soon must go, my days are a swift stream ;

Thy fond hopes must be shattered like the frailty of a dream.

Yet fear not ; He that freed thy son, will help thee when I die,

And, when thy days of flesh are done, will lift thee up on high ;

And, with salvation beautified, to thee it shall be given
To walk, with the redeemed of God, the starry floor of Heaven.

"What shall I say, that when I die my mother may not weep?

My blood, my life, would they were fused into one blessing deep!

Spring, and dew-dropping heaven, each star of goodliest influence,

Trees weeping balms, all precious things—oh, I would not go hence,

Till I could bless thee with all things! Nay, hear me yet—"

"Cease, cease!

I love thee so! I love thee so! I cannot be at peace!

"But to the Holy City I this night, this hour, will haste; Jesus is there, mercy I'll have." Beside his bed she placed Food—would not hear his kind reproof—swift went—yet, pausing, turned—

Again bent o'er him, and with love unutterable burned—Prayed leave to go—stayed not to hear refusal or consent; And all the night, led by the moon, wide o'er the hills she went.

CHAPTER VI.

MIRIAM AT THE HILL OF CALVARY.

The Holy City Miriam reached; but Jesus was not there, For He was gone to Galilee. She turned with mute despair,

And wearily retraced her path. Months slowly rolled away,

Her son still pining down through each gradation of decay.

At length she was assured that Christ was in Jerusalem,
And through the silent night again she went in quest of
Him.

As broke the spotted dawn she heard the sound of camel
bells,
Soft tinkling far; before her now a tented valley swells :
For from wide lands, and distant isles, the Passover could
still
Bring up the scattered tribes of God unto His Holy Hill.
Their whitening tents the valley filled; but all deserted
stood,
Save that some slaves went here and there to give the
camels food.

To Miriam's question they replied, their lords were gone
to see

A strange impostor crucified with thieves on Calvary.
Then went she on until she saw, above the City fair,
The Temple like a snowy mount far up in the clear air;
Around its upward-circling courts she saw the forms of
men
Bending in westward gaze as if some distant thing to ken.

Still was the sky. At once on them a mighty whirlwind
fell,

And tossed their garments seen afar, and brought with
many a swell

The City's din tumultous. A blind and smothering fear
On Miriam came; with breathless haste she to the gates
drew near,

Passed through the hurrying streets, and gained the foot
of Calvary.

She turned—a pomp processional, and shouting crowds
were nigh.

She saw—blind to all else—she saw Him whom she came
to seek,
Bearing His cross ; and thorns were crushed around that
brow so meek !
Immortal anguish held His face ; yet tempered with a
look
Which seemed prepared no shame, no pain, from mortal
man to brook ;
Prepared to burst all bands, to flash, put indignation on,
To shake—to thunder-strike—to quell His foes as from a
throne.

O Son of God ! Yet still His face majestic patience bound.
How can she ask, in such an hour, His help ? He turned
half round ;
She felt that He read all her heart, when on her face was
stayed
That eye, like an abyss of love. With clasped hands she
prayed.
With silent lips and reverent eyes. He turned from her
again ;
Yet left her to believe, with joy, her prayer had not been
vain.

How can she go and leave Him thus ? Oh how her bosom
burned
With holy gratitude to Christ, as up she slowly turned !
She saw the throngs go closing up ; the winding pomp
before
A lustre all unnatural upon its ensigns bore,
Beneath a burning sun that smote the summit of the
hill.
An ominous cloud, behind, o'erhung the City dark and
still.

Softly she joined a company of women; and they
stood

Afar, and oft with quick short look the glancing summit
viewed.

They saw not what was done—from this the greater was
their fear.

Mute, trembling, pale, forward they bent as if some
shriek to hear.

Horror on Miriam fell; she thought of Herman, and was
glad

That in his sickness a just cause to haste away she
had.

She went, yet oft looked back; she saw the uplifted cross
at last,

And shrieked, and faster went till she the gates of Zion
passed.

She passed the silent vale of tents, the camels grazing
wide;

The glittering streams shone in the sun, and shone the
mountain-side;

A forest near, when she its first outstanding trees had
won,

A horror of great darkness fell: the quenched day was
done.

She went into the night-locked wood; 'twas silent as the
sleep

That watched the hoary secrets of the uncreated
deep.

Then a sound shook the mountain-bars, as when some
fallen pile

Of ages sends a dull far voice o'er sea and sounding
isle.

Without a breath the forest shook ; and then the earth
was rocked ;
And trees fell crashing all around ; and birds of night
were shocked,

Screaming from out their rifted nests : with helpless
wings they beat
The ground, and came and fiercely pecked, fluttering o'er
Miriam's feet.
Steps, as if shod with thunder, ran. Through the in-
fested wood
Slowly had Miriam groped her way, and in its skirts she
stood,
When all at once burst forth the day from out the folds
of night,
And with rebounding glory flashed along the heavens of
light.

Wedges of terror clove her heart ; stumbling, she hasted
on
With dazzled eyes, and reached her home—her Herman's
life was gone !
Reeling she turned, she knew not why ; all blindly forth
she burst ;
But back she flew, and kissed his lips : "How durst I
go ! how durst
I leave him thus in death !" and then she beat her
breast, and cried,
"Had I not gone, had I been here, my Herman had not
died !"

CHAPTER VII.

MIRIAM'S INTERVIEW WITH HER SAINTED DAUGHTER,
JUDITH.

The mourners from the house of wo, the minstrels forth
were gone ;

Deep in the middle watch of night sate Miriam all alone,
Sleepless, in silent sorrow rocked, with fixèd gaze intense
On him dressed for the grave, her last, still dear
inheritance.

"Peace!" said a voice like the far-off soft murmur of a
wave ;

Starting she turned, she saw—"My child! my Judith
from the grave!"

With lips apart, with heaving heart, gazed Miriam on a
form

Lovely beyond the power of death, the grave's polluting
worm.

A lucid air enswathed her head: How excellent are they,
Dear God, Thy ransomed ones! On her consummate
forehead lay

The moonlight of eternal peace, solemn and very sweet ;
A snowy vesture beautiful came flowing o'er her feet.

"I see—I do—methinks I see my dear immortal child!
Come near me, God-given! Be not these the garments
undefiled?"

Those eyes, the spirit's sainted wells, o'erflowing still
with love,

I know them! Ever look on me, my own celestial dove!

Art thou not come to take me hence, the awful worlds
to see?

I long to go, I long to go, to dwell in heaven with
thee!

"Ah no, 'tis but a dream!"—"Fear not, for I am ever
thine!"

With beautiful tranquillity, with majesty divine,
Forth stepped the unblemished child of life, and with a
meek embrace

Folded her mother's crowding heart, and kissed her
breathing face:—

"Fear not; trust thou in Christ, who died this day man-
kind to save;

By whose dear leave I come to thee, redeemed from out
the grave.

"Many have been, greatly beloved! thy days of trial
sore,

Bereavement, sorrow, wandering, pain; but these shall
soon be o'er:

And loss, wo, weariness, all pain, each want, each mortal
load,

Are in the many-linkèd chain which draws earth up to
God.

But look to Christ, the assurèd One, and thou for aye
shalt stand

In the Lord's palaces of life, in the uncorrupted land,

"Oh, it is well with me, mother! No sin is there, no
night;

There be the bliss-enamelled flowers, bathed with the
dews of light;

Rivers of crystal, shaded with the nations' healing trees,
Whose fadeless leaves, life-spangled, shake in the eternal
breeze;

The shining, shining host of saints; the angels' burning
tiers;

And there God's face ineffable lights the perpetual
years!"

"Speak of thy father, holy child! my youth's spouse,
where is he?

Thy brother—he has left me too: Oh, are they saved like
thee?

Then with great joy would I rejoice, and calmly wait the
time

To join you all in Heaven. But speak, child of the un-
failing prime!

Thy mother's yet on earth—how lone! shall they not also
rise,

And come this night anew to bless these old o'erwearied
eyes?"

"Fear not; rest thou in hope and peace; to thee, on
earth below,

More of the Spirits' hidden world 'tis not allowed to know.
Now let me see my brother's face; night's mid-watch
passes fleet,

And in the Holy City I the risen saints must meet,

To pass with them into the Heavens." Slowly, with
trembling hands,

In silence Miriam from his face undid the linen bands:—

"Judith, draw near and see his face; upon thy brother
look."

And she drew near: her glistening stole one moment
ruffled shook;

Like light in tremulous water gleamed her eyes divine,
as they
Gazed on her brother as he in his bloodless beauty
lay ;
With earth's dear frailty tempered still—Heaven's great
and perfect years
Not yet attained—her eyes' sweet cups ran o'er with
many tears.

She parted on his lofty brow his locks of yellow hair,
And kissed his forehead and his lips ; then, with a sister's
care,
Around his dead composèd face the grave's white folds
she tied ;
She took her mother by the hand, and led her from his
side ;
Then stood the ethereal creature clothed with peace
serene :—" Thy leave,
Sweet mother ! let me go ; and say, dear one ! thou wilt
not grieve."

" I shall not grieve, I will not grieve. But come, through
the dark woods
Thy mortal mother shall thee guide, and o'er the crossing
floods.
Oh I am greatly glad for thee, my young lamb of the
fold !
Come near, and let me lead thee thus ; thy mother gently
hold !
For thou art washed in our Christ's blood ! for thou art
passing fair !
The very spirit of God's Heavens has breathed upon thy
hair !

"Now let me guide thee forth. Nay, nay, the thought is foolish all,
That thou canst wandering err, that aught of ill can thee befall.
Young dweller of the Heavens ! mine own ! the angels pure that be,
Primeval creatures of God's hand, in light excel not thee !
Those vivid eyes can look through night ! No monster of the wild,
Demon, or bandit of the cave, dares harm my sealèd child.

"In dazzling globes those angels wait, to bear thee with swift might
O'er the bowed tops of tufted woods to Zion's holy height !
Go then—ah ! thou must go indeed !" She smiled, she turned to go ;
But Miriam caught her shining skirts with a mother's parting wo,
And knelt, and clasped her hands. Then turned the daughter of the skies,
Raised, led the mourner to a couch, and breathed upon her eyes.

Deep sleep on Miriam fell. With face meek as the moon of night,
Far down in waveless water seen, a sleeping pearl of light,
A moment gazed that child on her ; then brightening went.
At morn,
With hope through sorrow, Miriam saw to dust her Herman borne.
Her faith was perfect now in Him whose blood for men had flowed.
Calm shone her evening life, and set in the bosom of her God.

SONG OF TIME AND MAN.

HIGH stood (he sang) the Sons of Light,
 Exultant o'er our wondrous birth.
 And through the alternate day and night
 Whirled the glimmering ball of earth.

Eden the Blest ! Ah, Sin is Wrath,—
 War and Famine, Plague and Storm :
 Crash goes the stony midriff of the earth,
 Flee ! the molten Fury's forth :
 'Tis Wrath and Death in every form ;
 Tremble ! 'tis the Second Death.

Life ! Life ! The Song, to Mercy's name,
 Was truth on fire—ecstatic flame.

Midnight by the screech of owls !
 Starved and gaunt the she-wolf howls :
 Her whelps, as fierce the tempest beats,
 Bite her yellow milkless teats ;
 Angry how she grins and howls !
 Simple storms ! a weirder power
 Brews on the dark undialled hour :
 What spectres thin, with blots of sin !
 By horns and capes
 Go wrecking Shapes,

Careering on the roaring din !
And the terrible Things that are here,
Came up by the Regions of Fear !
Twanged the wild chords. Morn in her dew,
Glistening green, and airy blue,
With roses red, and lilies white,
Made of the sweet consent of light ;
Far noon, where summer seas away
Melt on the trembling brim of day ;
Night-folded doves ; Peace with her moon
Charmed in the curdled clouds of June ;
And all the dædal earth he sang,
Till Beauty's haunts divinely rang.

Blood ! Blood ! It cries to Heaven !
(How the haggard chords are riven !)
Knotted scorpions, these the scourge,
See the frantic Furies urge !
Jar and tumult ! patriot Zeal,
Meet it with thy breast of steel ;
Rasp, rasp on the exasperated age,
Blunt the bristling civic rage.
Gravely sweet, he sang of Law,
Freedom, and Art, and Holy Awe,
Lists of renown, life's soft degrees,
Social charm, and lettered ease.

Him these blessings crown sublime
O'er all the sceptred sons of time,—
Him who scorned the mortal joys,
Him who scorned for self to reign :
What blocks of work, of awful poise,
Stood on that single brain !

He built our state. For Alfred flowed
The loyal Soul, the free and strong :
The people's heart, it rose and rode
Triumphant on the swelling Song.

Lord of all the sinewy graces,
Lord of all the sovran places,
Manhood kneels at Beauty's feet.
How the Song of Songs prevailed
To tell her majesty complete,—
The form, the bloom, the nameless grace exhaled
From the sweet symmetry of soul and life,
When Manhood blessed her his consummate Wife !

Mingled measure, quick of range,
Weep and joy for Wizard Change !
He splits the towers, but hangs sublime
A tongue in every rift of time ;
Good and ill he works for Man,
Yet good from ill itself in life's mysterious plan.

And realms that wait in hoary state
Shall move to issues sweet and strange.
Love melts the iron rim of Fate
Around the weeping world of change.

Hence the spotted Sin shall cease,
And all be Truth, and all be Peace :
Come, come, thou better prime,
Flower and maidenhood of Time !

The hornèd months that come and go,
They never count, they never know ;

Ranged in their kingdoms dark and deep,
I see the faded people sleep :
But, as we lie forlorn and dim,
The Lord, with woman's blood in Him,
Will touch our sunken eyes,
Fill us with life (he sang) and lift us to the skies.

Crashing bursts the choral thunder !
Never ending,
Still ascending,
Rolls the Song of Joy and Wonder,—
Joying that the cycled plan
Of Time is crowned with perfect Man.

THE END.

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